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bushwalking, skitouring  
canoeing and climbing magazine

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coast to coast

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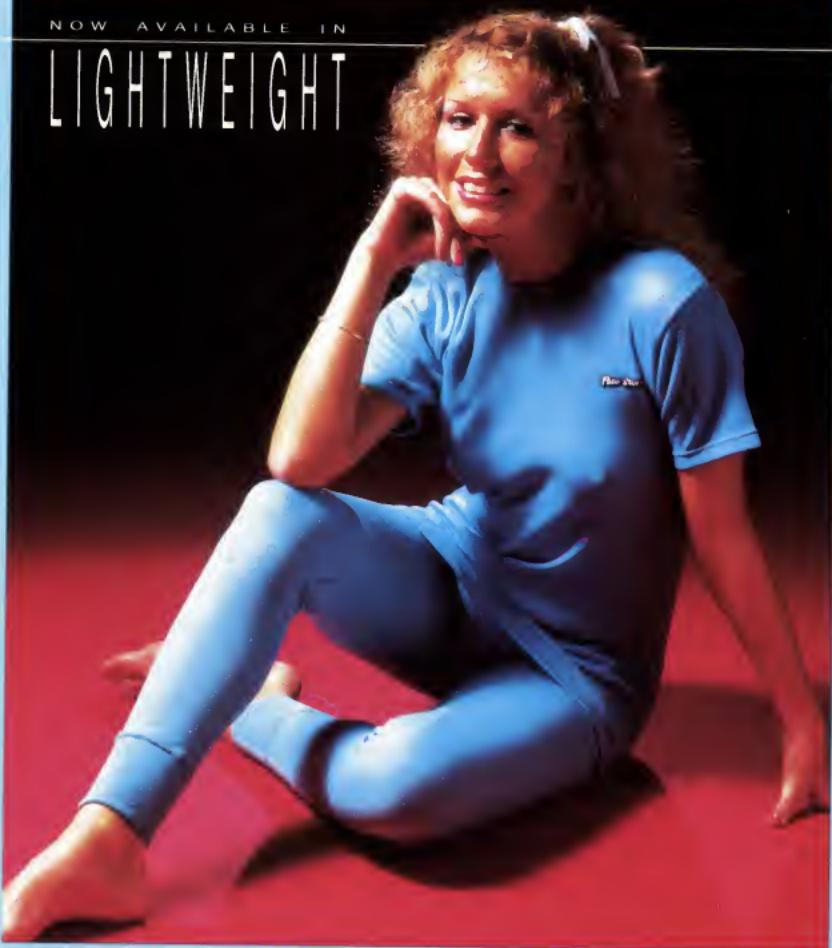
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# Australian Wild

bushwalking, ski touring  
canoeing and climbing magazine



Spring (October November December) 1986, Vol 6 No 4 (issue 22), NZ\$5.95\* \$4.50

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**Cover** Stefan Glowacz 'hanging out', unroped and barefoot, on popular ceiling climb, Kachroong (grade 21), Mt Arapiles, Victoria. Photo Uli Wiesmeier. **Contents** Brigitte Muir, left, and Graeme Hill at the bivouac below the crux pitch on the South-west Pillar of Shivling, Indian Himalayas. (See article on page 44.) Photo Jon Muir. \*Maximum recommended retail price only.



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#### Top

— Louise Shepherd and Jon Muir on Mt Cook (Low Summit) N.Z.  
Louise Shepherd Collection.

Centre

— Paddy Pallin, founder and our most experienced gear tester.  
The Barren Grounds, NSW.

Photo Ian Gibson.

Bottom

— Jane Mitchell, powder skiing,  
Hokkaido, Japan. Photo Mike

Edmonson, Paddy's Jindabyne.

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# Going Our Own Way

**Editorial**

• BUSH-LOVERS COMMONLY USE WORDS SUCH as 'freedom' and 'beauty' to describe their experiences in the bush and other wild places. We emphasize its 'Australian' character, the often intensely personal, almost spiritual, nature of our involvement with it, its wildness and the opportunities to escape from the material world.

It is ironic, then, that a number of trends in Australian bush recreation (not to mention the despicable and wholesale destruction of our land in the name of logging, hydro-electricity and tourism) seem to contradict these views. By our own, generally unthinking, behaviour we, ourselves, may be debasing what has come to be known as 'the wilderness experience'. This seems to be happening in small, even subtle, ways.

We speak of 'getting away from it all', but increasingly we are attempting to 'take the city to the bush' (rather than 'bush values' to the cities—where they are sorely needed). We are in danger of becoming a race of technomaterialistic gear freaks. Our rucksacks are becoming bigger and more and more stuffed with hi-tech creature comforts. Our gear shrieks 'bush commercials' with a galaxy of dazzling trade marks and manufacturers' logos. The stage has been reached where many rucksack sports 'enthusiasts' are more interested in gear, and in looking the part, than getting out and doing something. And surely, we do not need any more huts, such as those proposed for Tasmania's Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park, Victoria's Mt Stirling and elsewhere.

A country not noted for its self-confidence, we blindly ape other, often undesirable, aspects of European and, particularly, American society. Not content to embrace their preoccupation with hi-tech gear, we seem increasingly determined to parrot their language with our 'trails', 'backpacks', 'hiking' and the like. (As I noted in my previous editorial, this undesirable trend is being particularly encouraged at government level.)

It is a sad thing when those who profess to love the bush ruin it by thoughtless littering and damage to vegetation. But visits to areas popular with bushwalkers, such as Blue Lake, New South Wales, indicate increasing occurrences of such behaviour. Certainly, government has a role to play in the preservation of our wild places, but time and again it has been found wanting in this regard. It only responds to constant, vigorous and united pressure from major interest groups. In this we all have a part to play, both as individuals and as active members of the major conservation organizations. (From its inception *Wild* has vigorously lobbied governments, in its pages and by private submissions, to protect Australia's diminishing natural resources. *Wild* has also regularly contributed to major conservation organizations, both by cash donations as well as by subsidized and free advertising. These practices will, of course, continue.)

As governments are notoriously fickle on environmental matters, and not to be relied on,

it is all the more important that we set an example in bush protection—both to encourage others to do likewise and to lend credibility to our claims. Constant crying to governments to 'do something' will only lead to a 'wilderness experience' of insensitive and inflexible regulations, restrictions, red tape and bureaucratic heavy-handedness so abhorred by bush lovers. Already bush administration is exhibiting these characteristics to an alarming degree, and is apparently hell-bent on completely 'sanitizing' outdoor adventure.

We should strongly reaffirm our commitment to preserving what we regard as 'special' in our wilderness recreation—it's freedom, beauty and uniquely Australian character. *Wild* is proud of our wild places and of those who love them.



We will continue to celebrate them and to support young Australians broadening their horizons, such as through sponsorship of the Gasherbrum IV and Kangchenjunga climbs described in this issue.

Sharp-eyed readers will have noticed that this issue has four more pages than previous ones. Articles and other submissions to *Wild* have now increased to such an extent that we must return scores unused for every one we publish. Whilst this situation helps to contribute to the standard *Wild* has attained, it is frustrating for unsuccessful contributors. When possible we will continue to publish even larger issues to bring readers more of the fine material they would not otherwise see. (*Wild's* A4-size format is somewhat larger than that commonly adopted by other magazines.)

Readers will also have noticed that our Activities Surveys have changed direction and now aim to collate information not previously assembled. We welcome suggestions for future surveys, and generally, for your magazine. •

Chris Baxter  
Editor & Publisher

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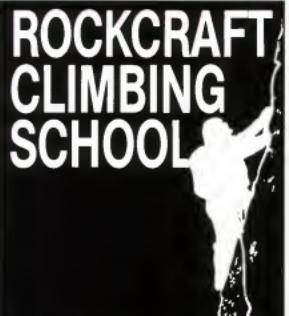
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- **Issue 6** Stoves survey, Stirling Ranges walk, ski tour from Kiandra to Kosi, Peter Genders, Dobrovskis photos, El Capitan climb, Tasmanian caves, track notes; Budawangs, Reedy Creek Gorge.
- **Issue 13** Cross country ski survey, walking in Croajingolong and Ben Boyd National Parks, skiing the Cobberas, reading the weather, Mt Arapiles, cave diving, Swampy Plains River canoeing, Antarctica, track notes; Mt Kosciusko skiing.
- **Issue 14** Synthetic sleeping bag survey, New Zealand Alps mountaineering information, Daintree battle, Snowy Mountains history, hypothermia, canoeing

women, ski mountaineering, bird photos, track notes; Kanangra canyons.

- **Issue 15** Rucksack survey, canoeing and rafting survey, Australians on Mt Everest, Blue Mountains walking and history, canoeing the lower Snowy River, skiing and bushfire folios, track notes; Rees and Dart valleys walk New Zealand.

- **Issue 16** Insulated clothing survey, rockclimbing and abseiling survey, Chris Bonington interview, New Guinea walk, Bathurst Harbour canoeing, Victorian walking history, Snowy Mountains ski touring, bush cuisine, Errinundra Plateau folio, track notes; Colo River and Otway walks.

- **Issue 17** Ski touring boots and bindings survey, ski touring survey, cross country downhill skiing, Nymboida canoeing, Prince of Wales Range walk, Mt Gambier caving folio, starting caving, Mt Everest West Ridge, track notes; Baw Baw Plateau ski touring.

- **Issue 18** Waterproof parka survey, bushwalking survey, Rick White, wilderness endurance events, Main Range ski epic, Kimberleys solo walk, walking boots advice, canoeing photographs, wilderness folio, track notes; northern Kosciusko National Park.

- **Issue 19** Down sleeping bag survey, Himalayan trekking survey, Tasmanian bushwalking special feature, Victoria's five

best canoeing rivers, New Zealand mountaineering photo essay, transporting an injured skier, Ayers Rock folio, track notes; Thomson River canoeing.

- **Issue 20** Winter tent survey, Australian Alps ski touring survey, Doug Scott interview, Victorian Alps; Mt Feathertop, 1904 epic walk, and folio, sea kayaker meets whales, Halley's Comet, adventure travel medicine, track notes; Royal National Park.

- **Issue 21** Cross country ski survey, Australian outdoor education survey, New Zealand skiing, bushwalking near Brisbane, Mittagundi, Geoff Wayatt interview, canoeing the Shoalhaven River, keeping dry in the bush, track notes; Lake Mountain ski trails.

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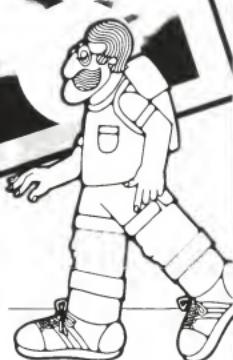
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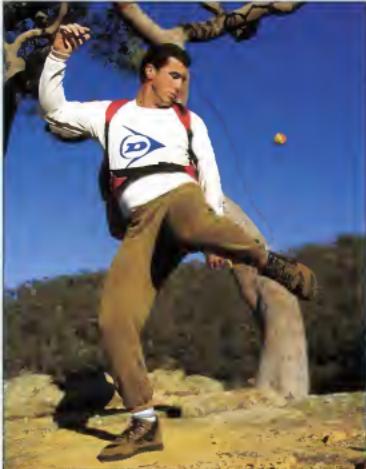


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Mt Sefton from the summit of Mt Cook, New Zealand. S Norman

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# Himalayas!

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## Wild Information

### • Australian Himalayan Successes.

Recent dazzling climbs in the Himalayas have

confirmed that Australian mountaineering is

emerging from adolescence.

Whilst it reaches to just below the magical 8,000 metre mark, Pakistan's Gasherbrum IV (7,925 metres) is one of the world's most beautiful peaks. Unclimbed since its first ascent, by Carlo Mauri and the legendary Walter Bonatti in 1958, it was the object of a joint Australian-USA expedition this year which was led by an Australian, Greg Child. (See *Wild* no 21 and article in this issue.) Child and



The South-west Buttress of Shivaling is a cloud-piercer in any language. The lower part of the route is out of the photo, to the right. Jon Muir. Right, Gasherbrum IV dominates the approach up the upper Baltoro Glacier. The North-west Ridge is the left skyline. Tim Macartney-Snape

Everest summiteer, Tim Macartney-Snape, were sponsored on this climb by *Wild*. The pair, together with an American, Tom Hall-Hargrave, reached the summit on 22 June after making the first ascent of the North-west Ridge, an outstanding effort on a route that had repulsed three other attempts. Four camps were established and a bivouac made, without bivouac equipment, on the summit ridge at almost 8,000 metres. A film was made of the ascent, and the party descended safely. (As we went to press Child had gone on to attempt a new route on dramatic, nearby monolith, Nameless Tower, with the Americans.)

Another outstanding first ascent was the 14-day 'capsule-style' ascent of the South-west Pillar of Shivaling, in India's Gangotri area, by the Australians Graeme Hill and Jon and Brigitte Muir. (See article in this issue.) Finishing on the West Summit of Shivaling (6,505 metres), their 2,000 metre climb is the hardest on this spectacular mountain, and was the peak's last



unclimbed ridge. The crux, high on the route, was a ferocious and loose pitch (graded A4.21) which took Jon Muir seven hours to lead. The ascent, attempted by the Muirs and two Victorians in 1985 (see *Wild* no 17) was filmed by Jon Muir. Prior to the ascent the team's Indian liaison officer died of exhaustion whilst ascending a fixed rope during an attempt, with Hill, on the original route on Shivaling.

The small Queensland expedition to Kangchenjunga (8,598 metres), also sponsored by *Wild*, climbed to within only 200 metres of the third-highest summit on Earth, and returned home safely, a remarkable achievement. Michael Groom was the climber who reached over 8,400 metres. (See *Wild* no 21 and the article in this issue.)

Another expedition, with climbers from four countries, including Rod Mackenzie and two other Australians, and New Zealander Peter Hillary, is currently attempting Rimo I (7,450 metres). This peak, one of the highest unclimbed peaks in the world, is in a remote area of the Indian Himalayas. The expedition intends to attempt it from the south, by way of a 15-day walk along the Silk Road to Kashgar, which has been closed since 1947. The expedition is accompanied by two leading American rafters who will guide its return from the area by way of the Shyok River, the highest river in the world to be rafted! We expect to bring readers a full account of the expedition in a subsequent issue.

American adventure travel operator, Mountain Travel, is leading commercial expeditions to two peaks which should appeal to millionaire-climbers: for a land cost of \$US11,350 each, they can attempt Tibet's Gurja

Mandhata (7,696 metres), or, for a land cost of a mere \$US19,000, Antarctica's Mt Vinson (5,121 metres)—see report in *Wild* no 21.

In *Wild* no 20 we reported the deaths of four Sherpas who were killed trying to bring assistance to trekkers trapped by a blizzard at Tilicho Lakes, Nepal. A trust fund has been established for the benefit of the Sherpas' families, and public fund-raising lectures will be held in Australian capital cities in September and October. Send any donations and requests for information to Four Sherpas Trust, PO Box 100, Mosman, New South Wales 2088.

The July/August 1986 issue of *Mountain* included a statistical article on attempts at climbing the world's 8,000 metre peaks. Some interesting facts emerge, including the information that there were more expeditions to the 8,000 metre peaks in the four years following 1980 (524) than in the previous 60 years.

The average success rate for expeditions to all these peaks is 47%, and ranges from 35% for Makalu to over 70% for Gasherbrum I and Shishapangma. Japanese expeditions to these peaks are by far the most numerous (ahead of France). Interestingly, however, their fatality rate on 8,000 metre peaks is behind that of the UK, the USA and West Germany, an interesting statistic when one considers the rubbishing Japanese (and before that, German) mountain safety has traditionally received from the British! The average fatality rate of 3.4% for all nationalities (Japan is 4.4%, UK 5.7%) is substantially below well-publicized estimates. Annapurna I and Nanga Parbat have the highest fatality rates (both over 7%), and Gasherbrum I the lowest (about 1%).

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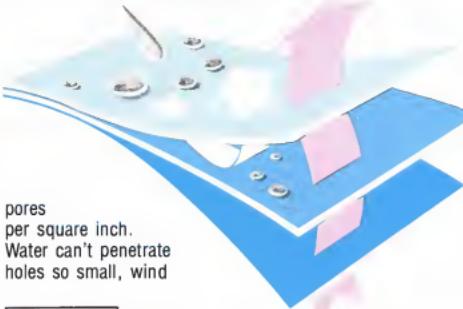
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Greg Mortimer wearing a Gore-Tex® down suit on the summit of Mt Everest. Photo Tim Macartney-Snape.

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● **The Deforestation of Australia.** Press coverage of the plight of Australia's dwindling forest is increasing. Melbourne's *Age* newspaper published a detailed, three-part study of the problem which reported that Australia now has only approximately a third of the forest cover it had when the first Europeans arrived, less than 200 years ago. This has led to serious salination problems in areas such as north-east Victoria. The *Age* concluded that 'The [timber] industry must face the fact that its primary resource is disappearing and changes must be made...' It estimated that within about only 25 years there will be no natural forests left in Tasmania outside National Parks. At the other end of the country, in Queensland, only 14% of Australia's wet tropical rainforest is protected, in National Parks.

Forestry plans leaked to the Wilderness Society at the end of June indicate that there are schemes to log three more Tasmanian areas next summer; below the Hartz Mountains, adjacent to the famous South Coast Track, and in the Huon valley, near the Huon Track. (These are in addition to existing operations at Farmhouse Creek and the Lemontyne forest.) In response, the Wilderness Society, the Australian Conservation Foundation and the Tasmanian Conservation Trust have announced plans for a 'summer of peaceful direct action in Tasmania's forests' and ask readers to plan their summer holidays accordingly!

On 17 June the Federal Government's Minister for Arts, Heritage and Environment, Barry Cohen, announced the allocation of \$22.25 million for the first two years of the National Rainforest Conservation Programme proposed by the Working Group on Rainforest Conservation. Conservationists have waited a long time for this decision which, they consider, is a very significant step in their campaign to save Australian rainforest. They are still very concerned, however, to ensure that high priority is given to the protection of virgin rainforest and a study of the rainforest timber industry.

Conservationists are alarmed at the approval, given in April by the Federal Government's Minister for Primary Industry, John Kerin, for a new export woodchipping industry to be established in Queensland and northern NSW. There was no opportunity for public comment on the proposal, and the decision was reportedly made without an Environment Impact Statement or the knowledge of Mr Cohen.

Even the Northern Territory has come under the chain-saw. A massive land clearance programme commenced last year at Tipperary, 200 kilometres south of Darwin. The scheme involves clearing 40,000 hectares of native vegetation for the establishment of pasture for cattle.

● **Sheilburne Bay.** In *Wild* no 20 we reported a proposal to mine for silica at this site in northern Queensland. The Thursday Island Mining Warden has recommended rejection of the application for the mining lease. The decision rests with the Queensland Minister for Mines, Ivan Gibbs, but the Federal Government will have the ultimate say on this project.

● **Netting.** In May the Federal Government announced its decision to ban the use of gill-nets longer than two-and-a-half kilometres in Australian waters. Taiwanese fishing boats have been laying gill-nets up to 20 kilometres long

in northern Australian waters since the 1970s. It has been estimated that approximately 2,600 dolphins are caught and drown in the nets each year. The Taiwanese have announced that gill-net fishing will no longer be feasible for them and they therefore plan to cease it in Australian waters. The government decision is a significant one, and a victory for environmental groups such as Greenpeace which have campaigned for a total ban on gill-netting in Australian waters.

● **Nuts and Berries.** A Melbourne student, Wendy Beck, has found that some Australian Aborigines can distinguish toxic and non-toxic plants. At times they can detect differences so subtle that they have defied recognition by scientists. She has also found that Aborigines can render many harmful plants harmless. Beck studied Northern Territory Yolngu tribe Aborigines for her PhD thesis.

● **Trailing Off.** As part of Australia's bicentennial celebrations, the Australian Horse Trails Association is establishing a 5,000 kilometre 'National Trail' from Cooktown to Melbourne. The proposed route follows the Great Dividing Range utilizing stock routes, tracks, and roads.

● **Trust Us.** The Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers, a non-profit, non-government, voluntary organization... [which] supports practical projects throughout Australia involving volunteers in the care and management of the environment' is appealing to bushwalkers, and others, to join it. Phone (02) 217 5814.

The Australian Wildlife Club, World Wildlife Fund Australia's club for children, can be contacted on (02) 29 7572.

● **Stranger than Friction.** Despite mounting opposition from climbers, retailers and wholesalers, the Federal Government recently reaffirmed its intention to maintain the high level of customs duty on imported rockclimbing friction boots (a minimum rate of 40%). The duty and tariffs are designed to protect 'local production... against import competition', despite the fact that no friction boots, nor anything like them, are made in Australia. These customs duties and the slide of the Australian dollar have combined to push the price of friction boots in Australia towards the previously unheard-of \$200 mark.

● **Decade** This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Outward Bound Hawkesbury Canoe Classic, now, according to the organizers, 'the premier marathon canoe racing event in New South Wales'. A total of 1,935 entrants have raised a total of \$284,000 for the Multiple Sclerosis Society of NSW.

● **Parks.** In *Wild* no 17 we reported that the New South Wales Government had announced its intention to establish a National Park in the Apsley Gorge, near Armidale. Now called the Wild Rivers National Park, the establishment of the 24,000 hectare park was announced on 20 April. It comprises 17 different parcels of Crown land and two existing National Parks, and includes the spectacular Wollomombi Falls.

The NSW Government prides itself as setting an example in environmental protection and conservation. It claims that since 1976 the area covered by National Parks in NSW has doubled,

there has been a 25% increase in the amount of harbour foreshores in public ownership, and a 60% reduction in air pollution. The government claims it has a detailed plan for the next ten years to ensure 'that the foundations laid by these achievements be built on'. This plan includes the introduction of a far-reaching Wilderness Act to ensure that all NSW wilderness areas are protected, the introduction of endangered species legislation, and extended protection to arid and semi-arid areas in the west of the State and to the north coast 'to prevent Queensland-style development'.

When NSW Premier Neville Wran retired in July (see item below) he was quoted in the *Weekend Australian* newspaper as saying that



Former New South Wales Premier, Neville Wran, on a bushwalk when announcing the establishment of the Goulburn River National Park, in 1982. Roger Lembit

his greatest single achievement was 'without doubt my legislation protecting rainforests in NSW: I am very proud to be leaving some fresh air and pure water and some room to move for future generations'.

The NSW Government recently announced extensions, totalling 1,000 hectares, to Wollemi National Park, and additions to a number of parks and reserves.

● **Cave Mining Moratorium.** Yessabah Caves, near Kempsey, New South Wales, are threatened by mining activities following the recent lapse of a lease over the Crown land reserve in which the caves are situated. The lease was subsequently extended and renewed as a mining lease. The NSW Mines Department has placed a three-year moratorium on mining in the reserve. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service reportedly wishes to see the area saved and is currently preparing a submission to this effect.

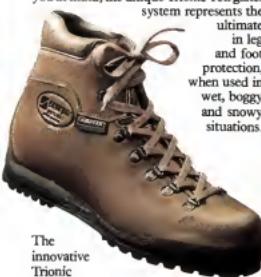
Stephen Buntor

● **A Last Walk.** For perhaps the last time in history, three walkers have just completed a 200 kilometre, three-week journey through unlogged and undisturbed forest on the south coast of

# For a dirty weekend

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Andy Lewis reading by torchlight.  
Kulu Himalaya.  
Photo: A. Hinke.

Glenn Tempest looking towards the Fainters and Mt. Bogong.  
Bogong high plains.  
Photo: Tempest/Keogh collection.

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New South Wales. The trip, during July and August, took Ian Robinson, Helen McMahon and David Poland, of the University of NSW Bushwalking Club, through the sensitive Tantawangalo and Coolangubra wilderness areas. These forests near Eden are the subject of intense debate between conservationists, who are calling for their protection as a National Park, and woodchippers. A Japanese company is currently seeking permission to extend its woodchipping operations. Such a move will make the walk impossible to repeat. Anyone interested in walking in the area over a long week-end in October can contact David Poland on (02) 398 4796.

• **Extensions to Royal National Park.** A conservation group known as the Friends of the Hacking River has produced a report on proposed extensions to Royal National Park in the vicinity of Helensburgh.

If accepted by the New South Wales Government, the proposal would prevent further urbanization of the remaining Crown land at the headwaters of the Hacking River. Compared to the Woranora River, the Hacking River is at present relatively unpoluted. The area near the river offers diverse habitat, ranging from heathland, rainforest and eucalypt forest. The rainforest, in particular, is important as it is one of the few surviving remnants of the Illawarra rainforest.

It is interesting to note that the 'father of Australia's conservation movement', the late Myles Dunphy, had proposed that this area be reserved during the Garrawarra campaign in the 1930s which saved the southern part of what is now Royal National Park.

Copies of the report may be obtained for \$20 from the Friends of the Hacking River, c/- The Total Environment Centre, 18 Argyle Street, Sydney, NSW 2000.

David Noble

• **Bruce's Walk.** Many bushwalkers may have looked at old maps of the central Blue Mountains and been puzzled by a track marked as 'Bruce's Walk' and extending 'across the grain' of the country from Lawson to Blackheath. This track has not existed for many years. Recently, a group of bushwalkers, led by Jim Smith, cleared part of the old track and reopened it. The section that has been reopened is from Wentworth Falls to Bullaburra. The track can be found by locating the high-tension power lines north of these towns (the first, smaller, set) as the track roughly follows under them.

In Early July another track-cutting activity was advertised, by the Mt Tomah Society. It plans to cut a track from Mt Tomah to Station Rock (near the Claustal Canyon Track) and place a plaque to the explorer George Caley, who is believed to have camped at Station Rock on his almost successful attempt to cross the Blue Mountains in 1804. Some bushwalkers feel this is unnecessary, as plaques already exist at Mt Banks (the westernmost point reached by Caley) and at Caley's Repulse at Linden (the probable westernmost point reached by Caley on an earlier journey).

DN

• **Suspension Test.** A New South Wales bushwalker recently had an unsettling experience when he returned from a week-long walk

to where he had parked his car near the start of the Narrow Neck fire track in the Blue Mountains. His car wasn't where he had parked it. It did not take him long to find it nearby—its front wheels over a 100 metre cliff! Luckily for him, the people who moved his car could not get it to topple over. This area, near the start of the 'Neck', is a popular parking place for

are the Border Ranges and Nightcap National Parks, and Limpinwood and Numinbah Nature Reserves on the far north coast of NSW. All of these areas are included in the NSW Government's nomination of rainforests in the World Heritage List.

The plans will be prepared jointly by the Australian and NSW National Parks and Wildlife



Victoria's Bogong High Plains—one of Ern Mainka's award-winning photographs.

bushwalkers and rockclimbers. They would be wise to park in places where it would be difficult for others to push a car away towards one of the cliffs.

DN

• **Premier Conservationist Retires.** The resignation of the New South Wales Premier, Neville Wran, in July has dismayed environmental groups in that State. Mr Wran will undoubtedly be remembered in years to come for the great advances in environmental protection which were made by his government.

Mr Wran's successor is Barrie Unsworth who, during the recent rainforest campaign, described conservationists as 'Volvo-driving trendies'.

Roger Lembit

• **Carr Douses Landholders' Claims.** New South Wales Minister for Planning and Environment, Bob Carr, has refuted claims made by landholders that National Parks are fire hazards. Mr Carr drew upon records held by the National Parks and Wildlife Service to support his argument. The records show that for the summer of 1985-6 only three fires out of a total of 73 escaped from Service-managed areas on to adjoining land. In contrast, 34 fires entered National Parks from neighbouring properties. A disturbing feature of the records is that 62 of the 73 fires in Service land were deliberately lit either by arsonists or in 'burning off' operations.

RL

• **Rainforest Management Plans.** The Federal and New South Wales Governments have signed an agreement which will enable the speedy drawing-up of management plans for four rainforest National Parks. The four areas

Services. They will identify sensitive conservation areas and provide a scheme whereby visitor facilities can be developed without damage to the unique rainforest environments in the areas.

The two governments have already cooperated in surveys of animals inhabiting these rainforest areas. These particular reserves also provide a habitat for a large number of rare rainforest plants which the NSW Service has been studying.

RL

• **Waste Paper.** New South Wales conservation groups are appalled at the standard of the Environmental Impact Statement prepared by the Japanese company Harris-Daiishowa for the renewal of its licence to export woodchips from its Eden plant. The EIS was prepared under Federal legislation which, they consider, is a quantum leap behind NSW environmental legislation. They claim that if the EIS was submitted under NSW legislation it would be thrown out by the Land and Environment Court because of its many inadequacies.

RL

• **Winner.** Ern Mainka, whose work was featured in the Folio of *Wild* no 16, has won the landscape category of the prestigious Professional Photographer of the Year Awards for 1986.

• **Demonstrably Absurd.** A demonstration in Melbourne on 26 May by the Victorian Sawmills' Association was condemned by the Australian Conservation Foundation as 'dishonest and manipulative'.

'The industry itself has created the employment crisis in East Gippsland', said acting ACF Director, Bill Hare. The ACF claims that over-cutting and the introduction of labour-

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saving technology have caused job losses. 'The VSA is attempting to cover up the simple fact that East Gippsland has been seriously overcut for 20 years. There will be a loss of jobs regardless of any new National Parks', Mr Hare claimed.

● **East Gippsland Logging.** In May Victoria's Land Conservation Council (LCC) published its proposed recommendations for public land in East Gippsland. These recommendations are for comment only, the final recommendations are to be made after further submissions.

The LCC report contains some surprising statistics. The vocal timber industry in East Gippsland employs only 'a total of about 580 people, including those involved in bush work, truck driving and further processing'. Many of these are only employed during the logging season. The total gross turnover in the timber industry in East Gippsland was 'more than \$38 million in 1983-84, whilst the flow-on effect to other sectors in the regional economy was more than \$18 million'. Royalties paid to the government exceeded \$4 million, but there appears to be no estimate of the costs to the government of supervising the timber industry. This small industry is removing timber from public land at an annual rate of 320,000 cubic metres, at which rate there will be no timber left to cut by the year 2005. A sustainable level of cut is only 138,000 cubic metres, even if no resources are withdrawn for National Parks.

These figures make it difficult to accept that the timber industry has been operating in a manner favourable to East Gippsland's long-term economic interests.

It is interesting to note that subscribers to *Wild* magazine in Victoria alone are in the thousands. Those who appreciate wilderness values must far exceed the number of people who receive short-term financial gain from logging in East Gippsland.

The LCC report recommends that the vast majority of land be left available for logging, and although it recognizes the superb natural values of the area, it advocates woodchipping (integrated with production of saw-logs).

The LCC report proposes a number of new National Parks, but sets a dangerous precedent in proposing that the National Park status of the Lind National Park be revoked and much of its area returned to State Forest, and therefore logging. The report also contemplates new logging roads passing through National Parks.

There are important areas excluded from proposed National Parks, notably the Coast Range, the southern Snowy River region, and the northern section of the Boddrib River catchment.

Of real concern is the emphasis on motorized recreation in the parks in East Gippsland. The LCC considered that 'the park system should continue to contain a series of linked roads, mainly of four-wheel-drive standard, available for use by licensed vehicles in order that extended touring throughout the area be possible'. At the same time, the LCC notes that 'if the increased recreational use of roads is to be catered for, adequate funding should be provided for road maintenance, otherwise deterioration leading to erosion is inevitable'. The misuse of wilderness areas by four-wheel-drive and trail-bike enthusiasts is notorious. They do great damage by way of pollution, noise and erosion. Frequently they carry dogs, chain-

saws and even firearms. A four-wheel-drive track through an area reduces its wilderness value by far more than the percentage of land in fact occupied by the road.

Conservationists consider that the closure of four-wheel-drive roads, particularly in sensitive areas such as the Rodger River wilderness, the sandy Croajingolong National Park, and the dry Tingaringy National Park, is essential to sound management. Where four-wheel-drive tracks are open for use, policing users is almost impossible.

The report proposes that 'an investigation be conducted to determine whether a road either adjacent to or within the proposed coastal park should be constructed to link Bemm River and Cape Conran without degrading or compromising the significant conservation values occurring in the park'. Such a tourism road would reduce the tourism potential of the fine coastal wilderness walk from Mallacoota to Cape Conran. It would traverse sensitive areas, particularly the lovely Dock Inlet.

It remains to be seen what the final recommendations of the LCC will be.

Brian Walters

● **Thomson River.** The Thomson River Catchment Committee has released its report on land use in this popular Victorian area, through which the Alpine Walking Track passes. It has recommended, among other things, that the existing access permit system be withdrawn and that there be no access restrictions to pedestrian use in the area.

● **The End of a Club.** The Southern Australian Section of the New Zealand Alpine Club is now defunct. It has been replaced by the Australian Alpine Climbing Club.

● **Victoria's Parks Expanded.** In May seven new or substantially enlarged National and State Parks were announced for Victoria. The largest is the 40,000 hectare Avon Wilderness Park. ('Timber production, grazing, mining, and motorized vehicles will be excluded in the park but activities such as hiking, rockclimbing, fishing, and cross country skiing will be encouraged') Other new parks include Mt Napier State Park (2,800 hectares), Kamarooka State Park (6,300 hectares), and Whiptick Park (2,300 hectares).

Mt Eccles National Park has been enlarged from 400 to 5,470 hectares. The Mitchell River National Park has been enlarged by 11,717 hectares and now incorporates 183 hectares of the Glenaladale National Park.

A number of smaller extensions to existing parks have also been made.

● **Walking Records.** Three members of the Walking Club of Victoria have proved themselves to be unusually active bushwalkers: Anne Butler has been on 65 walks in 18 months, John Mader has done 200 walks in four years, and Ralph Alger has averaged a walk every month for 39 years!

● **Gasp, Wheeze, Splutter . . .** Whilst on the subject of records, last winter Peter Treseder became the first person to run the classic Kialandra to Perisher route, New South Wales, on snow shoes. His time for the jaunt was 12 hours 30 minutes, the previous fastest time on

snow shoes being four days. Treseder used a pair of Australian-made Woorak snow shoes which had been specially modified by their designer, Paul Fardoulis.

Warm-ups of this nature dispensed with, in November Treseder plans to run from Mt McKenzie in the Barrington Tops, NSW, to Walhalla, Victoria, in 12 days! Covering a total distance of 1,439 kilometres (an average of 120 kilometres a day) and involving a total rise of 51,890 metres (with a similar total fall), the route chosen follows traditional bushwalking routes and largely avoids fire roads and other forms of 'civilization'. To be attempted solo (who could keep up with him?), there will be no large-scale back-up and only three food, and map(!), dumps on the trip. A typical day's travel planned by Treseder is that from Consett Stephen Pass, NSW, to the Mitta Mitta River, Victoria. We expect to bring readers a full report of the outcome in a following issue.

● **Baw Baw National Park.** Visitors to the Baw Baw National Park in Victoria will have been disturbed to see cattle roaming in the park in recent times. The authorities expect to remove the cattle this year.

Some 'development' of the park for cross country skiers, has occurred in the Mt St Gwinear area. *Wild* has been assured by the Minister for Conservation, Forests & Lands, Jim Kirner, that apart from those areas already marked, ski trails will not be cut through the Baw Baw Plateau.

It is of concern that the main trail between Mt St Gwinear and Mt Baw Baw has been marked with a pole line. This is appropriate in open areas but there seems little advantage to be gained by placing treated green poles amongst trees where the track passes through forest. The traditional technique of attaching track markers to trees through such areas would not only be more effective but less environmentally damaging.

Ms Kirner has indicated that only the route between Baw Baw Village and the Mt St Gwinear car-park will be marked in any permanent way, although other temporary routes will be established during winter.

This popular bushwalking area also has a number of scars from campfires. Whilst a campfire is very pleasant in an evening, in many cases little effort has been made to disguise ashes and remove rock rings, and degradation of the area has resulted. It is time for all bushwalkers to consider reusing existing fire sites or using a stove instead.

The Department of Conservation, Forests & Lands has issued a substantial report on the impacts of camping on snow plains in the Baw Baw National Park. One hundred and fifty campfire sites were located, mapped in detail(!), and 'assessed' in the survey area, which was less than half of the Baw Baw Plateau. The favoured 'management options' under consideration include the development of alternative campsites off the plateau, and a clean-up of existing campsites.

BW

● **Classic.** The 1986 Wildtrek Winter Classic (see report in *Wild* 18 on the 1985 event) was held near Omeo in north-east Victoria on the week-end of 26-27 July. The event attracted a record number of competitors (508, compared with 440 in 1985), but half the teams did not

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complete the course. The kayaking section, in particular, took its toll. The Mitta Mitta River had been in flood only two days earlier and was still high during the event.

Winners of the arduous Marathon division were Rod Harris and Roy Smith (winners in 1984 and runners-up in 1985) in 9 hours 17 minutes 24 seconds, followed by last year's winners John Harris (no relation) and Robert Russell (9:47:24). The course was slightly altered this year, resulting in faster times.

The winning combination team (six-man relay) was 'Gadaff's Gorillas' (8:27:36)—not significantly faster than the winning Marathon team. The first women's combination team to finish was the 'Windwheelers' (11:10:48).

**Blockage.** In July a landside blocked the road to Victoria's Mt Buller ski resort. The road was cut for two days and partly closed for a further six days.

**Tell 'em.** Victoria's Department of Sport and Recreation has launched a scheme to reduce loss of life among skiers. The scheme involves the use of a 'trip intentions' form which is left with a responsible person.

**Plans.** The Community Recreation Council is preparing an Outdoor Recreation Plan for Victoria. It is intended that the report be used as a basis for government action regarding outdoor recreation in Victoria over the next three or four years. Submissions closed on 30 June.

The Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs has received a grant for \$2,100 from the Department of Conservation, Forests & Lands for the production of pamphlets and posters outlining a minimum impact code for bushwalkers.

**Alpine Walking Road?** The Victorian section of the Alpine Walking Track was commenced in 1970. The section from Glen Wills (near Mt Wills) to Tom Groggin (on the Murray River) extends for approximately 120 kilometres. Part of it was diverted to avoid the Dartmouth Dam. In addition to this diversion of the track, which is largely along roads, two-wheel-drive roads have been permitted to be built along several sections of the Alpine Walking Track itself. An example is the Eustace Gap Track, which was a narrow and little used four-wheel-drive track which has now been upgraded to a ten metre wide road leading to the Dartmouth Dam. The Alpine Walking Track follows this road along the beautiful stretch of the range including Wheeler Gibbo (1,360 metres). There are other access points to the dam, but there is nowhere else for the Alpine Walking Track.

Another section of two-wheel-drive road has been built along the Alpine Walking Track between Gills Creek and Four Mile Creek, west of the Mitta Mitta River.

It is to be hoped that these roads will be closed and that no further roads will be permitted to be built along the Alpine Walking Track.

BW

**Ruby Rose.** The Tale of Ruby Rose is a Tasmanian feature film, much of it set in the beautiful Walls of Jerusalem area of Tasmania's central highlands. The film is supported by the

Wilderness Society, which sees it as an opportunity to bring this rugged, snow-covered scenery to a wide audience in Australia and overseas.

A number of bushwalkers have complained about the presence of the film crew, with a generator and temporary huts, in the area. However, the project is under the strict

Musgrove. At about the same time they died of cancer. Brian Kershaw was inspired by the courage and faith with which they faced death. For him, the name 'Steadfast' expresses the quality of their friendship, as well as their attitude in suffering.

On a misty day in February 1984 Brian Kershaw and other friends and relatives walked



The Art Director's heart-throb, Melita Jurisic, as Ruby Rose, at the Walls of Jerusalem, Tasmania. Peter Whyte

supervision of Tasmania's National Parks and Wildlife Service, which will ensure the area is returned to its original state.

**Mt Steadfast.** What is the highest peak on the Bogong High Plains? Many bushwalkers and skiers would be quick to answer Mt Nelse (1,882 metres) although the pedant might say Mt Nelse North (1,884 metres). In fact, neither is the highest. The highest peak on the Bogong High Plains (and therefore the third highest in Victoria) has no name.

Some years ago Brian Kershaw set out to climb the two Mt Nelse peaks taking the track over Spion Kopje. Seeing a major rise ahead, he left the track and climbed to the top. It was not Nelse, but appeared to be equal in height and was apparently nameless. The peak is on the Spion Kopje spur some way east of Spion Kopje itself. Subsequent examination of published maps (Natmap Bogong, grid reference 288237) shows the unidentified peak to be 1,891 metres. It is surprising that such a peak can have been missed for so long, but it is of unspectacular shape and has several high peaks around it, as well as the indignity of a four-wheel-drive track near its summit.

Brian Kershaw wants to name the peak Mt Steadfast. The name has significance in describing the men and women who first ventured into the area, but also has a personal significance for him. He had intended to visit the peak with two friends, Burt Coutts and Kath

to the peak from Rocky Valley. They held a service in memory of their friends, gathered rocks together in a small cairn and named the place Mt Steadfast.

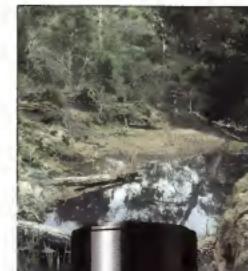
Victoria's third highest peak should have a name. 'Mt Steadfast' expresses something of the indomitable spirit of the Bogong High Plains.

BW

**Mt Arapiles.** Australia's premier rock-climbing venue is to become part of the Mt Arapiles-Toocan State Park which is expected to be declared in 1987. The managing body, Victoria's Department of Conservation, Forests & Lands has called for submissions to assist in its preparation of a management plan. When this is released, written submissions on it will be requested before the final management plan is released. Climbers are strongly encouraged to write—contact (053) 82 5011 for details. It is hoped that there will be no attempts to apply ill-conceived bans and restrictions on climbing, such as at Werribee Gorge State Park, Mt Buffalo, and elsewhere—restrictions that, almost without exception, have been sought out of ignorance of the nature of contemporary rockclimbing. (As there are already reports of proposed bans on climbing on parts of Mt Arapiles at certain times, including on Tiger Wall and Campbells Kingdom, climbers are advised to act promptly.)

**Great South West Walk.** The Great South West Walk, based on Portland, Victoria, is now a round walk, total distance of about 250 kilometres. The walk starts and finishes

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opposite the Tourist Information Centre on the southern shore of the Portland waterfront. Going generally east, it keeps close to the foreshore, away from busy streets, as far as the start of the Dutton Way, then climbs over a low cliff and returns to the shore by the Grand Maritime Steps. The next, short, part of the route is the least attractive of the whole walk, generally beside a high breaker, then back to the sands of Portland Bay. The walk leaves the coast and heads northward along Methodist Camp Road, across the Princes Highway and along Hollins Road. A government road reserve, New Road extension, and Flowers Road (all clearly signposted) lead to the former start of the walk at Heathmere, by the highway. A new campsite has been established nearby. The distance from Portland to this point is about 18 kilometres.

To return to Portland from Yellow Rock on the shore of Nelson Bay (the original finish of the walk), the route generally follows the coast to near Point Danger. It then inevitably becomes civilized, around the awesome vastness of the Alcoa complex, and back to the Tourist Information Centre by road verges and footpaths. Some improvements to this final section, the work of local people, will be made as soon as possible. A new map and brochure will be published later this year. Enquiries: Department of Conservation, Forests & Lands, Heath Road, Portland, 3305. Telephone (055) 23 3232.

Sandra Bardwell

• **Cutting Down the Jargon.** The Wilderness Society has observed that 'a fascinating sidelight to the forest policy saga in Victoria has been the word games, executed with particular inventiveness by the Department of Conservation, Forests & Lands'. The following is a lexicon for the uninitiated: 'integrated harvesting' and 'residual roundwood harvesting' mean woodchipping; 'multiple use' and 'forest regeneration' mean logging; 'full sunlight regeneration' means clear-felling; and 'liberation treatment' means cutting down old trees!

• **Cave Protection.** The Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service has tightened permit restrictions for the State's 'limited-access caves'. These measures are designed to eliminate many of the problems associated with overuse of the several well-decorated caves which are also those most frequently used as introductory caves. These caves are sometimes visited by large parties which show little care for the caves. The new permit system, which requires application from the secretary of an Australian Speleological Federation club, is expected to alleviate these problems.

SB

• **Tony Dicker.** Tasmanian sea kayaker, Tony Dicker, whose article appears in *Wild* no 20, drowned in a severe storm whilst attempting to row across Bass Strait, alone. A would-be rescuer drowned during the search for Dicker, whose attempt at the crossing was strongly criticized by police. Dicker was well known for having paddled a kayak round Tasmania.

• **Cockle Creek Bus Service.** Bushwalkers Transport in Hobart will have a scheduled bus to Lune River and Cockle Creek starting this summer. The service will operate each Monday,

Wednesday and Friday from 8 December to 13 February. It will service the South Coast Track, the Moonlight Flat Track to Precipitous Bluff, and the Lune River Youth Hostel. Along with the scheduled service to Scotts Peak, Tasmania's South-west will now be accessible by guaranteed transport during the peak season.

• **Youth Trek.** Young South Australian bushwalkers are on schedule to complete a 2,000 kilometre walk across their State. As part of the Jubilee 150 Youth Trek, small groups of high school students have walked in relay from the northern desert region to Cape Jervis in the south. For most of the way the walkers used the Heysen Trail, passing along an expedition journal and a traditional Aboriginal message stick. In an Australian first, a private corporation, the Southern Farmers Group, has provided \$100,000 for the year-long promotion of bushwalking for youth.

• **First Bushwalkers Remembered.** On 3 May a plaque was unveiled on the summit of Mt Brown by Adelaide Bushwalkers as that club's contribution to Jubilee 150, and to commemorate the first climbing by Europeans of a Flinders Ranges peak. Mt Brown was first climbed on 10 March 1802 by three members of HMS *Investigator* during the famous voyage of discovery of Matthew Flinders. As well as putting 48 members on top of Mt Brown for the unveiling, the club also celebrated its fortieth birthday with an overnight camp and barbecue at a nearby station.

John Bartlett

• **Operation Raleigh.** After five-and-a-half weeks of near-continuous paddling, a group of 23 international expeditioners and leaders from Operation Raleigh completed the first descent of Western Australia's Drysdale River. The team paddled, towed and portaged over 320 kilometres through some of the roughest, remotest terrain in north-west Australia. (See *Wild* no 21)

Expedition leader was Clive Richardson, a well-known Canberra white-water tour operator. The group used ten two-person inflatable canoes and a four-person raft. Richardson's siege tactics and use of inflatables, against expert advice, triumphed where several previous attempts had failed. The expedition became a race against falling water levels to avoid the horrendous portages over sand and rock which had defeated other expeditions.

A great amount of Aboriginal rock art was discovered during the expedition. Some of the sites are thought to be of a considerable age—about 10,000 years.

Hazards encountered included 40 metre waterfalls and salt-water crocodiles. No major injuries occurred, and the group was lifted out by helicopter from the Drysdale estuary on 17 June.

Joe Schmiedchen

• **Rather Taxing.** The Western Australian gold-mining lobby is waging a major campaign to ensure that their activity continues untaxed. Conservationists consider that tax should be levied and the revenue used to restore the damage done by gold mining in WA. Thousands of square kilometres of flat and undulating low eucalypt forest and salt lakes between Norseman and Meekatharra are punctuated by

deep shafts, mounds, giant slime dumps and tailings dams. The devastation continues with the recent activities by both small prospectors and multi-nationals. With the miners' litter, the scars of bulldozed survey lines and over-grazing by pastoralists, this captivating environment is becoming a wasteland.

Peter Ewing



Operation Raleigh grinds to a halt in a pandanus thicket on the upper Drysdale River, Western Australia. Joe Schmiedchen

• **Honourable Exit.** In April a proposal by Japanese space scientists to explode a rocket on a salt lake near Kalgoorlie received nationwide Press coverage and support from the Western Australian Government. The Japanese planned to pack a test rocket with 400 kilograms of explosives and place it in Lake Yindordgooda to simulate launch failure. This lake has significant environmental and scenic qualities worthy of protection.

Ironically, the Japanese Parliament perceived the reaction of Australians to the idea as negative. Their strong sense of national pride has apparently led to the indefinite halt of the test.

PE

• **For Sale, Genuine Antiques.** In the south-west of the State, the home of Western Australia's majestic karri forest, the councillors of one shire have recently discovered that by selling off 400- to 500-year-old karri trees along shire roadsides in National Parks (as well as along other shire roads), it is possible to raise funds for road-making purposes. Now every tree along roads in the Manjimup Shire (famous for its scenic roads) runs the risk of being sold to the millers.

Naomi Segal

• **'Clayton' National Park.** The Western Australian Department of Conservation and Land Management has released its draft management plan for the Shannon-D'Entrecasteaux National Parks in the south-west of the State. True to prediction (*Wild* no 21) it has been proposed to let off-road vehicles and

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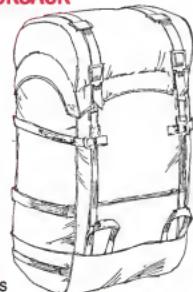
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commercial horse-tour operators into the parks and into sensitive dune and beach areas. It is also proposed to burn most of the park at short intervals.

NS

• **National Outdoor Education Conference.** The fifth such conference is to be held in Perth on 11-15 January 1987. The theme of the conference will be 'Using the outdoors to advantage for educational, recreational and remedial purposes'. Further details can be obtained from 151 Royal Street, East Perth, Western Australia 6000.

• **Coast to Coast.** This famous mountain race across New Zealand's South Island and involving running, cycling and kayaking will next be held on 6-7 February 1987. Entry details are available from PO Box 4533, Christchurch, New Zealand.

• **Bulmar Cavern.** There is now a new deepest cave in New Zealand and the Southern hemisphere. Expeditions to the South Owen Karst Field discovered Bulmar Cavern, then a higher entrance, Castle Keep Cave. The connection of these two brought the total depth of the system to -720 metres. This figure exceeds the most recently reported depth of Nettlebed Cave (given as -700 metres not -740 metres as quoted earlier—see *Wild* no. 21).

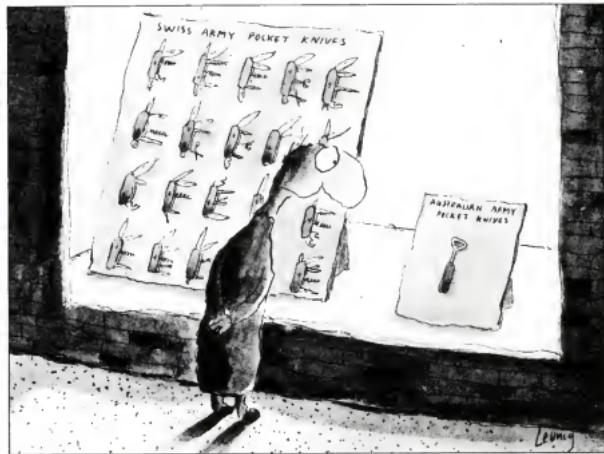
SB

• **Antarctica.** Scientists are concerned at the marked decline in elephant seal populations. A recent count has revealed that the number of seal pups born on Heard Island and Macquarie Island is only about half the number revealed in a similar census in the 1950s. The Australian Antarctic Division is stepping up research to find out more about the animals, the largest of the Antarctic seals. Recent studies have revealed that elephant seals are capable of wandering thousands of kilometres from their breeding grounds on sub-Antarctic islands.

An annual Antarctic School Science Prize has been set up to enable two Australian secondary school students and two teachers to travel to the Australian Antarctic Territory each year to perform experiments. For further information telephone (002) 29 0202.

• **Kokoda Record.** Papua New Guinea's 98 kilometre Kokoda Trail is known as one of the world's most rugged walks. On 28 May Osborne Bogaijawai completed the trip in 28 hours 14 minutes 30 seconds. A trek leader for Port Moresby's Pacific Expeditions, Bogaijawai had walked the route at least 17 times prior to his record-breaking trip from Kokoda to Owens Corner, which slashed almost eight hours off the previous record.

• **South-east Asian Caving.** The fourth Australian expedition to visit the karst of northern Thailand was again successful in exploring numerous extensive caves. Previous expeditions had made Tham Nam Lang the longest cave on the mainland of South-east Asia, but exploration of Tham Mae Lana has meant it now holds that distinction. With a total length of 8.8 kilometres, Tham Mae Lana is a great through-trip. A further kilometre was



added to Tham Nam Lang. Tham Pha Puek was explored to a depth of -165 metres, with an entrance height of approximately 100 metres. It is the deepest cave in mainland South-east Asia.

SB

• **South American Climbs.** Sydney brothers Milton and Richard Sams (see Milton's article in *Wild* no 5) had a previously unreported and productive visit to South America in 1984-5. They started the trip by rockclimbing in Rio de Janeiro, which they report has seven rock-climbing clubs and 33 major cliffs within the city limits! Their longest climb there was over 700 metres. Their next port of call was remote Tierra Del Fuego in southern Argentina, where they attempted or climbed seven peaks, including a four-day ascent of North-east Ridge of Mt Martial. Moving on to Patagonia, in Chile, they spent 28 days there and climbed two unnamed peaks on the eastern edge of the Patagonian Ice Cap, and next day crossed the ice cap and climbed a peak overlooking the Pacific Ocean! They then headed north and climbed or attempted some 17 routes, some of which they filmed, on major peaks in Argentina, Bolivia and Peru. Despite eight-day attempts, they were unsuccessful on the East Ridge of Argentina's Mt Tronador (3,554 metres) and the South-east Face of Peru's Ausangate (6,372 metres). However, their successful climbs included three routes on Bolivia's Huayna Potosi (6,080 metres) and an ascent of the South Face of Peru's Alpamayo (5,947 metres), climbed last year by *Wild* designer Michael Colle.

• **Mountain Medicine.** The UIAA Mountain Medicine Data Centre is a non-profit organization providing free advice to climbers. For information send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the Centre, c/- Department of Neurological Sciences, St Bartholomew's Hospital, 28 Little Britain, London EC1, UK.

• **Films.** A 'world festival of mountain pictures' is being held at Juan-les-Pins, France, on 15-19

October, followed by the fourth International Competition of Mountain Films at Barcelona, Spain, on 19-25 October.

• **Greenland.** The First Australian Expedition to the Arctic (see *Wild* no 21) has departed for Greenland. A last-minute change to the team was George Pompei's replacement of Rob Casamento as the fourth kayaker. The team left Melbourne in June amid a blaze of publicity that would have done justice to a royal wedding. The expedition intends to paddle 1,200 kilometres from Angmagssalik to Julianehaab in south-east Greenland. They expect to take about ten weeks for the voyage, during which they will be accompanied by a film crew in a more substantial craft!

• **Going Down in Flames.** An organization calling itself the Australian Dangerous Goods Air Transport Council is concerned at the incidence of dangerous items, such as gas cylinders and fuel for portable stoves, being carried aboard aircraft in passengers' luggage. The Council is appealing to readers to heed regulations in this connection.

• **Stop Press.** While going to press, news came to hand that Melbourne climber, Terry Tremble, has made the first Australian ascent of the infamous North Wall of the Eiger, in Switzerland—a milestone for Australian alpinism. Tremble is currently on an expedition to Jannu in the Himalayas.

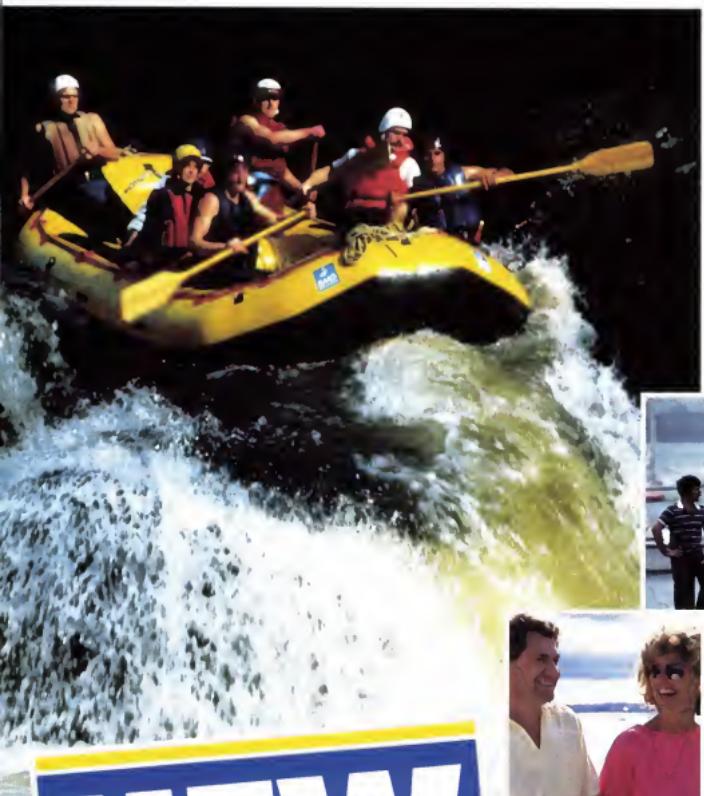
• **Corrections to Wild no 21.** Anne Gray's name was misspelt on page 23.

The map on page 57 has the location of the Return Trail incorrectly marked. Similarly, the Echo Flat Trail is no longer all one-way.

The phone number for BBQs Galore given on page 93 should have been (02) 707 3344. Willis's Walkabouts was misspelt on page 94.

Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be published. Send contributions to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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# Food for Thought

Eating better in the bush, for less, with *Robert Townshend*

**Wild Ideas**

• PEOPLE WHO WANT TO WALK, PADDLE OR SKI for extended periods away from all sources of food supply face the following problems:

• Tinned foods do not go off, but they are heavy, bulky, and seldom of the best quality. You carry a lot of water and metal for a dreary result.

• Ordinary dried foods, such as rice, beans, chick-peas and split peas, do offer value for weight, but they place impossible demands on time and fuel. They not only require lengthy cooking but they sometimes need long soaking before they are ready to be cooked.

• The special dried meals now available in camping stores have obvious advantages. They offer sustenance and convenience—but they are expensive, and only available in specialist shops. The alternative foods I suggest are more readily available, but the main advantages are their versatility and, above all, their cheapness. Some of my meals cost one-tenth of the price of a good-quality pouch dinner!

• Cheaper dried meals and soups are widely available, but, as well as all their preservatives and artificial flavourings, they contain monosodium glutamate, a major cause of food intolerance, and a substance which creates the illusion of protein intake without delivering the protein. The body wakes up and, after a time, you lose your appetite for such foods. Pity help you if they are all you have!

Before we decide what is good, let us consider what is not. Obviously, a food is not good if it is heavy, bulky, expensive, or if it is a 'pretend' food (a trick played on the body by the palate). We also insist that our foods should not be messy, and that they can be easily packed in plastic bags (sealed with rubber bands, not twists that can pierce the plastic!) —not a rigid container.

Fortunately, some foods already in common use pass the test, and these foods are adequate for all morning and daytime meals. Rolled oats or quick oats (the size of the flake is the only difference) are the ideal breakfast. The brown sugar and dried milk which go with the porridge are also sensible foods for the track. Snack bars and seed bars that cannot melt, nuts, dried fruit, and halva also pass the test. Of course, no one could argue with flour for making damper, or with some dried egg for scrambling.

The problem has always been to find foods for the main meal, a large and sustaining meal that can be cooked in a tent during a downpour, or boiled up on a Trangia when you are caught on a windy ridge. Below is information about the foods and where to obtain them; recommended foods are italicized.

**Cereals.** At the top of my list are *rolled grains*. A wide range is now available in health food stores. I have already mentioned oats, but the quickest, most digestible of all is *rolled rice*. Though it is a whole grain, it cooks much more quickly than white rice! Other rolled grains do not cook as quickly or give the same hearty consistency, but they are worth trying. *Rolled millet* is a valuable food, and *rolled barley* is just as good as pearl barley though it cooks



Cooking up a storm! John Harding

in a fraction of the time. Oats and rice, however, are the best camping foods. I recommend rolled grains over ground grains because they cook more evenly and are less sticky.

The other form of cereal I like is *quick-cooking noodles*, which now abound in Asian food stores and ordinary supermarkets. They are cheap, and they are good. The Chinese ones are made of wheat, rice or green-bean; and the wheaten noodles are often prepared with egg or with prawn concentrate. Japanese specialty shops, and most health-food stores, now sell Japanese noodles made from whole-

grain rice, wheat, and buckwheat—more expensive but good.

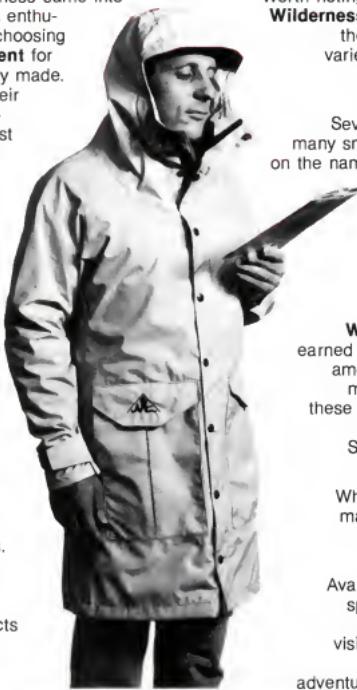
**Meat and fish.** The best sources of animal protein are the *prawn and fish powders* available in Asian shops. The prawn powder, in particular, does wonders for a pot of rice and lentils. I can think of no meat products that meet the needs of campers as well as do these powders. Meat concentrates are just lumps of grease, caramel and monosodium glutamate. *Dried smoked beef* is all right, but not nearly as cheap or as easy to prepare as the prawn and fish powders. Heavily smoked pork products, such as *smoked speck* and *salami*, have their uses, but these sources of protein

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**Wild Ideas**

(and fat) contain quite large amounts of chemicals and preservatives. One common product that I like is *parmesan cheese*—it is real food, and it goes a long way.

**Vegetable protein.** Another Asian product is *sliced dried bean-curd*. The smooth little rectangles of wonderfully digestible protein can be soaked in a short time, and cooked in seconds; their soaking liquid is sweet and delicious. Two warnings: be careful to buy it sliced, not the big crinkly sheets of curd which are quite unsatisfactory; remember that the hard little slices are quite sharp and capable of cutting through not only their own packet but an adjacent packet of lentils or tea, so wrap them in a spare woolen sock.

An obvious choice is *lentils*. Red lentils, in particular, are fast-cooking, if you have been able to soak them first. It is generally assumed that all dried beans need long cooking and soaking, but *small black-eye beans*, as well as the mung and azuki beans which are sold for sprouting, are fast-cooking. Rolled soy flakes are now available in health-food stores and are worth trying.

One other item for the ultra-light camper is *miso*; look for it as a dry paste. Miso is manufactured from barley, soy, rice and other natural substances, and being highly salted it cannot go off. Use it as a topping for damper or as a flavouring for soup, but do not overdo it. Too much of any preserved food, even if the fermentation and preservation are natural, can spoil your diet.

**Fruit and vegetables.** *Dried fruits* are heavy and expensive, by comparison with other items, but they probably justify their weight. I would not be without raisins; they are not expensive and I use them in the pot whenever I can. Dried apples seem lighter than other fruits, and they are a good cooking item.

The cheap dried vegetables sold in Asian food stores are watercress and Chinese greens. They are not easy to soak or cook, and they produce a rank-tasting broth, as do dried Chinese mushrooms. I prefer ordinary freeze-dried vegetables, available everywhere. They are light and fast to cook; the commonly available varieties are corn, peas, carrots, beans, onions, and potato. For leafy greens the best thing to do is to obtain dried parsley, and to use it generously. It is available in fancy containers in supermarkets, but some bulk-food stores supply it cheaply by the bag.

*Dried garlic powder* or *garlic flakes* can be bought anywhere. They are ideal, of course, but one fresh food I sometimes allow is *fresh garlic*. A clove a day will not break the straps on your Karrimor.

Two condiments which are also vegetables are *tomato flakes* and *paprika*. But do not pack the fancy jars they come in!

### Recipes

Preparation of some of these foods by soaking a little beforehand, which is usually possible, will help them to cook. Rolled rice, noodles, and freeze-dried vegetables do not need it, but in the case of black-eye beans, lentils and bean curd, two hours' soaking in cold water (or much less in hot), will prepare them for the pot.

Remember never to salt foods like lentils and beans until they are nearly cooked. Salt hardens them, as do sugars and acids.

If beans and lentils give you gas, you can always nibble on some nice fresh charcoal

(often available to campers) to alleviate the problem.

**Prawn and lentil chowder.** Take up to a cup of red lentils and rolled rice combined (50/50), per person. Soak them, preferably in hot water, using double the quantity of liquid to dry ingredients. When they are ready to cook, bring them to the boil in a pot or billy, and simmer them for five minutes, stirring occasionally. Add any freeze-dried vegetables you fancy, and some garlic powder. You will need to add water, as all these foods expand. After about eight minutes, add salt and tomato flakes to taste and a good spoonful of prawn powder, preferably (but not necessarily) soaked. Cook and stir the mixture for a few minutes, until it is ready.

**Long soup.** Hot-soak for half an hour two or more slices of bean curd, broken into small pieces, in just enough water to keep them wet as they swell. In your billy or pot cook some freeze-dried peas and onions in a little more than a cupful of water per person. After a couple of minutes throw in a handful of noodles, and cook them in the vigorously boiling water for just as long as the packet directions suggest, or to your own taste (I like all my noodles chewy). Then add the bean curd and soaking water. Reheat, and the soup is ready. For more flavour you could add prawn powder, fish powder, parsley or miso. With long soup there is no sticky pot at the end of cooking.

**Baked beans.** Hot-soak two-thirds of a cup per person of small black-eye beans as suggested above, with a handful of dried onion. To cook, simmer them together until the beans start to soften; this should not take long. Use only enough water to keep them covered and cooking. Now add a good handful of raisins; allow them to soften and to soak up most of the remaining liquid. If the mixture gets too dry, just add a little more water. A few minutes before serving add salt to taste and a spoonful of tomato flakes. You now have a sweet, thick baked-bean 'casserole'. To make a still richer brew add some of that smoked speck or salami you allowed yourself to bring.

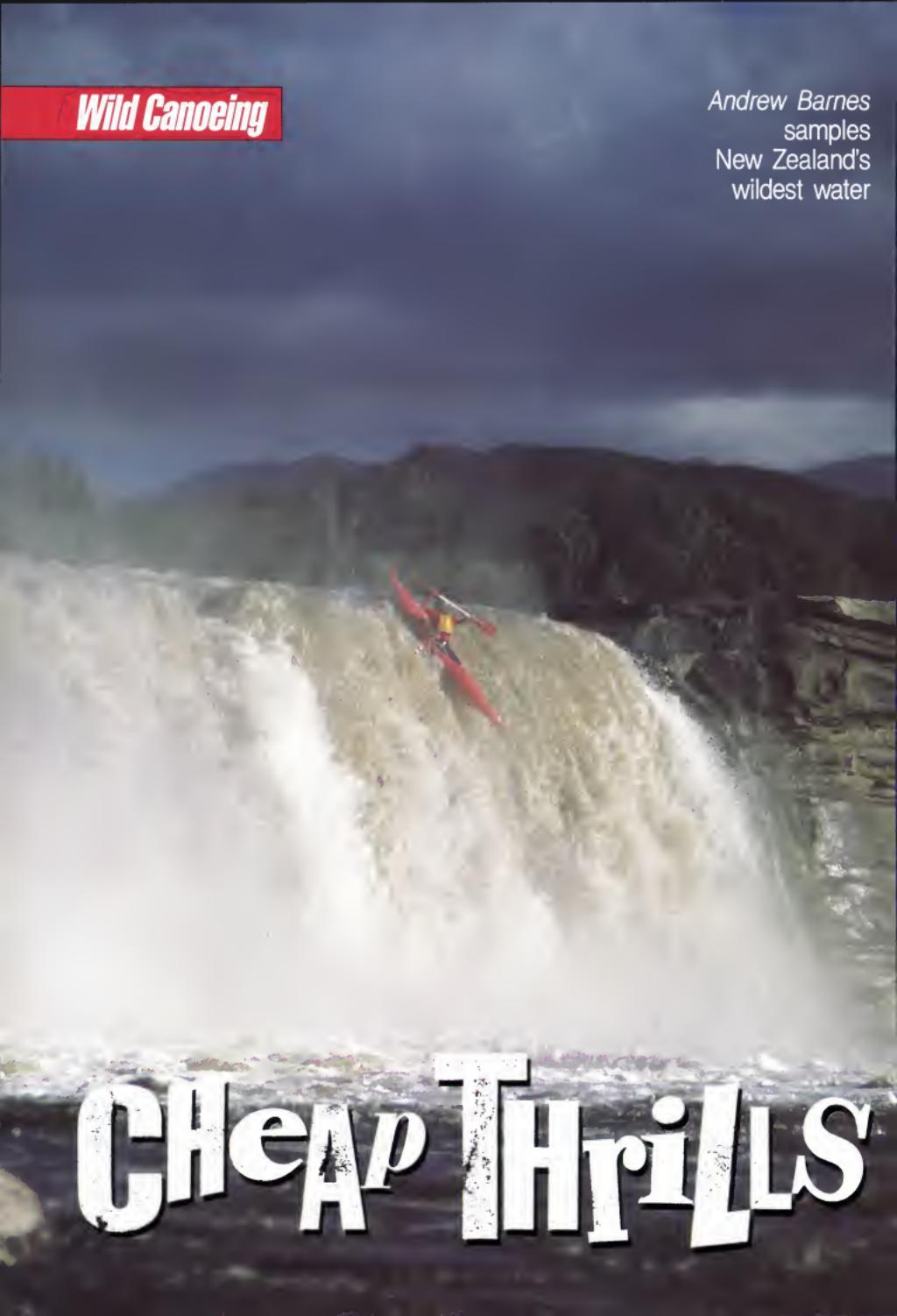
**Italian noodles.** This is not a one-pot recipe, but it is certainly easy. Heat some smoked speck and salami, chopped small, in a pan until the fat is released. Stir in a finely chopped clove of fresh garlic. To this add some freshly-boiled noodles—how you drain them is up to you!—toss them all together, then add parsley flakes and parmesan cheese to taste.

Would it matter if you left out the bean curd from the long soup, because you do not like the look or taste of it? What if you tipped the Italian noodles on top of the baked beans? What about mixing the prawn and lentil chowder with the long soup? Once you understand these foods you can do whatever you like. The whole idea is that, unlike the alternatives, they are cheap and adaptable. And all this is just a beginning. There are other foods on the market that I have not tried yet, but which seem ideal. By all means keep using your pouch dinners and packet soups, but learn to use the foods which are cheaper and more versatile.

Have you ever spent a couple of weeks canoeing on the Darling? If you do, prepare some of the prawn and lentil chowder, then throw in all those shrimps, yabbies and perch fillets you have no trouble catching there, and just feast yourselves for a few cents while you watch the sun go down over the mighty Centre ... that is what bush cookery is all about! ■

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**CHeAP THRiLLS**

● EACH YEAR THE WAIKATO RIVER, NEAR Taupo on the North Island of New Zealand, plays host to the 'Do Your Thing Weekend'. I arrived at Full James rapid ready and eager to paddle. However, I spent much of my time as a spectator as rafters floated down the rapid in craft of all shapes and sizes. People sitting in rubber tubes followed, most losing their seat in the first wave. Just when I thought I had seen everything, a figure wearing mask, snorkel and fins swam past, hanging on to a polystyrene surf-board. When the rapid was clear, 20 or more kayakists would display their skills, or lack of them! Getting tired of sitting in a kayak, many would jump out of trees overhanging the rapid!

The rest of the week-end I battled the high flow ordered from the Hydro Commission. It was just big water, I thought, but later I considered it a good warm-up for Maori Gully on the Hurunui River.

A week later I was on the South Island. As a pleasant interlude we decided to paddle the Arnold River. Nothing over grade two, I was assured. To launch my boat I had to gingerly tread the only two boards still intact on an old and decrepit bridge. When I was half-way across, and the structure was swaying alarmingly, Mark called, 'It's a grade-two river, but you have to be capable of a grade-five bridge crossing!'

Who knows what dread Taniwhas lurk in Maori Gully? Ignoring such myths and superstitions, we set off down the Hurunui River. As a precaution we sacrificed our weakest paddler as we entered the gorge proper. The river flow was very high and I quickly encountered some big waves, with the occasional haystack exploding in front of me. Staying upright was top priority, and the gully was over before I could catch breath. As we dragged our kayaks up a steep shingly bank I commented to Ian that it was the biggest water I had paddled. Ian told me it was a good warm-up for the Kawarau River!

'Chinese Dog-Leg' is a name to open the adrenal glands of many a New Zealand canoeist. Mark told me to take the right-hand channel round the island as we paddled toward the top of the rapid. All I could see was a wide, smooth slick of water leading to an abrupt horizon. Alarmed, I looked for a break-out above it. Usually, a river characteristic like this would denote a dangerous stopper. Was I going to come to grief in a horrifying Kawarau stopper? The river's great volume of water flowed past smooth cliff walls, leading us inexorably to the edge of the drop. To my relief, a huge 'V' of slick water funnelled towards a series of waves. Paddling down that wide, green, accelerating tongue of water, I suddenly realized how the scale of the approach had tricked me. The first wave was the biggest I had seen. I paddled furiously up it and saw it was the first in a set of five or six, all of which were more than the length of my kayak from trough to tip. As



Andrew Crane looping on the earthquake section of the Buller River. *Left*, a jet boat went over there the other day... none of it was seen again! Steve Gurney pushes his luck on Muruia Falls. All photos Andrew Barnes

I crested the last, another wave screamed in from the right, and I braced off it, dropping into a confused false eddy formed by backlash from the cliff wall which caused waves and boils to run in all directions. Bracing hard, I rounded the 'Dog-Leg' and paddled another 200 metres of waves and stoppers. Finally I broke out beside Terry, who asked me if I was ready for Cromwell Gap!

The Clutha River was running at a rate of 3,000 cumecs a second. Even at normal levels it carries a high volume of water: many of its tributaries are large rivers in their own right. At that level it inundated its flood plain before rounding a long bend, and the entire river funnelled between the cliffs that create Cromwell Gap. The rapid formed by such a tremendous amount of water is huge. Even from high on the bank it was noisy and very intimidating. The approach consisted of a funnel of water. Flanked by confused and boiling eddies, the whole mass combined to form a wave at the end of a 'V'. Instantly, water dropped away on both sides and raced toward the cliffs. Bouncing off the cliff walls, the backlash formed two huge boils, each the size of a house, which surged downstream and inward. Where each boil rejoined the main waterline it created an overlapping wave.

Tumultuous water surrounded this wave as the entire flow sped down the last and steepest gradient, culminating in a stopper wave which was 'breaking' to over a metre in height and which extended almost across the river. After a long and nervous inspection we decided it was safe to paddle, as long as the approach was taken in the middle and the stopper hit towards the right.

Adrenalin charged through me as I approached the rapid. I felt happy with my line as the water speed increased and my kayak seemed to lead itself over the wave at the end of the 'V'. Paddling hard, but making little headway towards the right, I found it extremely difficult to maintain direction in water of such power. As I slipped towards the overlapping wave, I suddenly found myself shooting backwards toward the stopper. I braced behind and over my shoulder, incredulous to find I had ridden up, along and over it.

I broke out into an eddy which seemed to be surging to a height of almost a metre, just in time to see Greg power straight into the stopper. Taking control, it 'broke' over him, causing him to do an underwater back loop, but washing him through a moment later.

About this time some members of the group started muttering about Maruia Falls. But I took no notice, and thought instead about the Shotover River.

Skippers Canyon Road, the only access to the Shotover, is certainly very scenic. Layer upon layer of hills and gorges lead

finally into the snow-covered ranges near Mt Aspiring. After negotiating its twists and turns I felt that nothing on the river could scare me as much as the drive in!

Mother Rapid is the stuff of which many a Queenstown tourist brochure is made—a long section of grade-three water interspersed with grade-three/four drops, with names such as 'Toilet Bowl'. It is an exhilarating run between tight canyon walls, through standing waves and stoppers, finally coming to an end after almost half a kilometre.

Having successfully paddled Mother Rapid, Chris decided to fall out in a grade-two rapid. I went to his rescue, and towed him towards the river bank. An unseen hole suddenly appeared in front of me. Chris let go as I stroked hard to avoid it, skilfully managing to drop sideways right into it! The hole seemed to absorb me as I supported above my head. Bracing hard, completely submerged, I was spat out in an airborne front loop, rolling up to an appreciative audience, with Chris already on the bank.

The rapids eased as I dropped back from the main group to play in one. Not long after, I rounded a corner to hear Ian say, 'They're almost through'. I turned to see what he was talking about, when Steve called 'Let's go, Ocker' and paddled towards a dark hole in the rock! We paddled into the Shotover Tunnel with Steve hooting and hollering whilst I desperately tried to lever my kayak off the tunnel wall. The rest of the group followed, 14 kayakers paddling through the tunnel, able to see very little except the light at the end! Unseen by anyone, Chris had once again decided to fall out of his boat, just a few metres into the dark! After 150 metres we were ejected from the tunnel, straight into a grade-three chute. Tourists on the bank watched bemused as 14 kayaks issued forth from a dark hole in the hillside. Unable to stop, we careered down the rapid, followed closely by Chris who swam the entire tunnel and shot the final rapid on his nether regions!

Granity Creek Rapid on the Buller River had, in the words of a friend, 'shape and form'. It was more like the Australian rivers I was used to, and I proceeded to find as many eddies as I could on the way down.

In stark contrast, the earthquake section of the same river provided wide rapids with big water, although not on the scale of that of the Kawarau River. The earthquake section takes about four hours to paddle. It was formed, in 1968, by the Ihangahua earthquake, during which a huge landslip slid into the river and created a new playground for white-water canoeists.

Our small flotilla of kayaks, which in typical New Zealand fashion consisted of roughly 80% plastic boats, found some superb surfing waves and stoppers in this section. I watched as they looped and surfed in a rocky stopper, often denting their 'plastic fantasitics'. Becoming envious, I nosed my kayak into the stopper, thinking one loop would not hurt. Crack!

A tremendous loop was made, but to the detriment of the nose of my kayak, which snapped off 12 centimetres from its tip.

Whilst the others paddled the Matakitaki River I spent the next day effecting repairs, hoping, for some strange reason, that it would be ready for Maruia Falls, known to have been paddled only four times previously (with one attempt resulting in a ruined plastic boat and the paddler on crutches). Terry, Steve and Murray had been 'psyching up' to paddle the falls since a previous trip to the Buller River. A tremendous roar of water and a



**Above** and **right**, Martin Bell ('Captain Marvel') shows how it is done, at Cromwell Gap on the Clutha River.

heavy mist caused by the ten metre drop greeted us as we stood and inspected the waterfall.

A few tourists appeared as we paddled about at the bottom, peering at it from all angles, discussing the dangers and possibilities. I clambered up the opposite bank, and warily waded along a rock ledge to the edge of the main fall. Whilst the others watched from the bottom, I sent assorted logs over the edge, but nobody seemed sure whether they emerged from the bottom of the fall. As I waded back to shore, still trying to decide whether to paddle it, a farmer intervened to help me decide.

'You know a jet boat went over there the other day?'

'No, a model one?'

'Nope, a full-size, radio-controlled boat with two 44-gallon drums in it. None of it was seen again.'

I climbed down to tell the others while Terry and Steve, who had decided to paddle it, were carrying their kayaks up the other bank. Five minutes later, Terry, having just stopped short of fighting Steve for the honour of going first, paddled furiously over the edge. More than 20 spectators, tourists and paddlers alike, held their breath as he dived over ten metres and disappeared into the boiling mass below. He popped up a moment

later, jubilant as he paddled toward us. It is amazing what some people will do for thrills!

The best paddling time in New Zealand is between November and the end of March, but only June–August are very cold. Excellent white water can be found throughout New Zealand. Looking for high-volume water? Try the rivers near Queenstown. Dane's Back Country, PO Box 230, Queenstown, phone (Queenstown) 1144, is a contact there. The North Island is better known for its technical runs.

Getting kayaks across the Tasman can be difficult. Contact your airline, and be polite. (Try the 'sporting goods' angle—mine went on as luggage.) A good alternative is to buy a plastic kayak in New Zealand, and ship it back. Check whether it is possible to fly kayaks to Wellington, where only smaller Qantas aircraft land

River guides are available from the New Zealand Canoe Association, PO Box 3768, Wellington, and Alp Sports, 235 High Street, Christchurch. The NZCA is a good source of general information. On the South Island, the University of Canterbury Canoe Club is active, and hires out plastic boats. Contact Ian Russell, 22 Banbury Crescent, Burnside, Christchurch; phone (Christchurch) 58 7665. For the North Island, try Kupe Canoe Club, c/- Robin Rutter, 59 Norton Park Avenue, Lower Hutt, and/or Ewan Stubbs, President NZCA, 37 Fairview Road, Mt Eden, Auckland; phone (Auckland) 60 0156.

Cautionary notes: gradings in New Zealand are much closer to a 'world scale' than our own; our grade four would be considered grade three to three-and-a-half in New Zealand water—practise! Gear can be hard to obtain; take spray decks, paddles and other gear with you. ●

## New Zealand



Andrew Barnes (see Contributors in *Wild* no 13), one of the 'new breed' of white-water paddlers, recently took time off from working in Melbourne outdoor shops to sample some of New Zealand's wildest water.



# Tasmania: Coast to Coast

An epic walk from north to south through Tasmania's 'wild west'; by Roddy

● TWENTY YEARS AGO THE WILD AND roadless tracts of western Tasmania were little-known outside the Island State and little-celebrated within it. Today, after two prolonged and often bitter conservation battles, this remarkable part of Australia has received international recognition as one of the world's last great temperate wilderness regions.

Despite its growing fame, few people have traversed the western Tasmanian wilderness in its entirety. In our 40-day, 400 kilometre walk from Bass Strait to the Southern Ocean, we found a land of fickle temperament where the elemental moods vary sharply between peaceful benevolence and dramatic hostility.

From the township of Penguin on Tasmania's north-west coast, we turned our backs on the grey squalls of Bass Strait and walked towards a distant forested hill, its olive eucalypt tones given a momentary brassy shine by a shaft of summer sunlight. Our route took us through these hills to the Leven River and, eventually (on a track cut by the Northwest Walking Club), to Cradle Mountain Lodge nearly 80 kilometres to the south. Despite being surrounded by some of Australia's most fertile agricultural land, the Leven has retained much of its wild character. Forestry operations began in 1848 and continued for a long time. Today there are much easier pickings for loggers, and the river only rarely rings to the whine of a chain-saw.

We briefly left the forest to negotiate the dairy- and hop-farming settlement at Gunns Plains before tackling, over two days, the delights of the rainforest-choked Leven Gorge. The shapely myrtle tree, often festooned with epiphytic mosses and filmy ferns, is the most characteristic tree of Tasmania's cool temperate rainforests, which are largely restricted to the wetter western half of the island. The leatherwood tree, source of Tasmania's unique honey, was in blossom, its large white petals occasionally fluttering down like snowflakes on to the eddy currents of the river.

At one little sandy beach I innocently remarked to my wife that a snake could do worse than find such a spot for sunning itself. As I spoke, a large black tiger snake uncoiled itself from beside my left boot and slithered out of my shadow into the sunshine again! Thank goodness for reptilian lethargy!

We passed the Leven Canyon where the river has cut immense sheer walls and where it thunders and cascades in



spectacular fury, and climbed the forested slopes of Black Bluff to the wild open moorland at Paddys Lake. The alpine flora of Tasmania is characterized by tough wind-pruned woody shrubs. Where the shrubs have grown tall, progress can be painfully slow but where they are short and stunted, as on Black Bluff, the alpine moorland is a walker's delight. As we walked, each footprint released volatile oils from the leaves of the lemon-scented boronia, infusing the air with a sharp lemon fragrance.

From the top of Black Bluff we viewed, in the indigo shades of dusk, the rugged and mountainous land we had come to see. Strangely primitive-looking peaks rose from undulating moors like ancient sailing ships scattered upon a stormy sea. This was our first view of the World Heritage Area which stretches in a ribbon from north of Cradle Mountain all the way to the wild and lonely south coast. Made up of three National Parks (Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair, Franklin-Lower Gordon Wild Rivers, and the South-west), this unique wilderness was included in 1982 in the prestigious collection of sites listed by UNESCO's World Heritage Commission.

After two days of negotiating mountain ridges and sub-alpine rainforests, we reached the start of the World Heritage Area at Cradle Valley, a still unspoiled but very popular tourist destination. Numerous walking tracks lead into the mountainous wilderness to the south, the best-known being the Overland Track which runs all the way to the southern end of Lake St Clair, a distance of 80 kilometres.

The first Europeans to penetrate the Cradle Mountain area were surveyors for the Van Dieman's Land Company, a large colonial pastoral enterprise. James Fossey named the mountain in 1827 from its resemblance to a baby's cradle, and, four years later, Henry Hellyer became the first of many Europeans to climb it.

Hellyer's report was not optimistic. The country was not suited to stock grazing and, in addition, access through dense forest and scrub was difficult. 'We were not able to force our way on five hundred yards in an hour in some of these horrid scrubs', laments one entry in his journal. He was obviously unaware of the nearby native 'roads' by which the Aborigines had traversed this country for centuries. Other surveyors, timber-getters, prospectors, hunters, trappers and track-cutters passed this way over the next 80 years, but none had a dramatic impact. However, in 1909 Gustav Weindorfer, an Austrian, explored the region and became enchanted by it. As a botanist, he found it to be a 'veritable El Dorado' and, as a Carinthian, he achieved immediate empathy with a wild land of mountain, lake and forest. Weindorfer devoted much of his life to having the Cradle Mountain area set aside as a National Park, building a chalet, Waldheim, in 1912 in order to attract visitors. In 1922 the Tasmanian Government declared 60,000 hectares a Scenic Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuary.

After Weindorfer's death in May 1932, Waldheim continued to provide service for visitors over many years; it is now run by the Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service, which has faithfully restored it to its original shape and condition. It is a beautiful structure, built of king billy pine trees from the surrounding forest, its warm brown tones offsetting the cooler shades of the rainforest. Today it has great historical charm, bringing to mind the halcyon days of the 1920s when no road came within miles. In those days, cold winter nights would coax Weindorfer's neighbours—wallabies, possums, native cats and others—to share the warmth of his log fire.

The wildlife is almost unbelievably tame. The native mountain jay, or currawong, a large black bird with beady eyes, seems ready-made for its role of daytime camp pirate, making off with anything that appears remotely edible, and at night the brush-tailed possum luxuriates in its role as Robin Hood of the Tasmanian mountains. Perhaps the most appealing are the Bennett's wallabies, who obtain their food by relying on winsome cuteness rather than bold effrontry!

From Cradle Valley we climbed south on to a wild rocky plateau dotted with prostrate shrubs and shallow tarns. To the south lay scores of stark peaks, their fluted dolerite spires catching the morning sun. In this area, cirques, moraines,

past  
clean

erratics, glacial lakes and other features have been left as a legacy of the last Ice Age. Today the glaciers have gone, but icy conditions still descend on the mountains from time to time. This can happen at any time of year, but it is most dangerous during summer when many inexperienced and poorly equipped bushwalkers visit the National Park. There have been several fatalities.

Nature seemed to have forgotten about snow and ice as we laboured under heavy packs in oppressive heat for three days. Thus lulled into a false sense of security, we awoke one morning to a world of grey clouds and approaching thunderclaps. For two days the rain fell solidly, reminding us why it is that so much rainforest grows in this area.

The Overland Track is a great place for meeting other bushwalkers, and this particularly applies to its huts on cold rainy days. Steaming bodies converge to swap stories of leeches and mud, marauding possums and leaking tents, along with tales of the inevitable delights of bushwalking. The huts, though, are also problematical. To many people, they diminish the quality of the wilderness experience and provide focal points for litter, environmental damage and pollution of water supplies. We met one group of ten who had all contracted an intestinal complaint, presumably from polluted water. Many Tasmanian bushwalkers are upset at government proposals to allow an entrepreneur to construct four more huts for restricted private use, seeing it as not only an impost on the wilderness quality of the area, but as the possible forerunner of other developments in National Parks.

For a few days we left the Overland Track to enjoy the quiet serenity of the corners of the Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park which lie off the main walking thoroughfare. It was at this time that we had a strange experience. At night, close to our tent, the possums growled and knocked around our billies, and later we were wakened by the vociferous grunting and howling of Tasmanian devils close by. The devil is a solidly-built carnivore, the size of a small dog, and has earned its common name through a combination of filthy temper and ferocious jaws. We did not intervene in their domestic dispute! However, there was a third noise which made us both sit bolt upright. The stillness of the night was pierced by a high-pitched barking, perhaps half a kilometre distant. It cer-



**Left,** Kerrie Maclean greets one of the residents, a Bennetts wallaby, at Cradle Valley. The wildlife here is exceptionally tame, providing visitors with the opportunity to see some of Tasmania's fauna at close range. **Below,** evening light catches the southern face of Mt Oakleigh (1,280 metres) in the Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park. All photos Roddy Maclean



tainly was not a tame dog, for the nearest settlement was too far away and no dogs are allowed in the park. The only possibilities were a feral dog, which is unlikely, or a thylacine, which is known to bark. The thylacine or Tasmanian tiger, a large marsupial carnivore, is thought by many to be extinct, and although numerous recent sightings have been recorded no positive proof of its existence has been forthcoming. Alas for us, the identity of our Barker remained a mystery.

On another sweltering day, we climbed a ridge-top to view the country ahead. Behind us to the north were the dark dolerite mountains near Lake St Clair, which make up in boldness and majesty what they lack in grace and shapeliness. To the south lay a range of high shapely peaks, blue with distance, but studded with the unmistakable sparkle of quartzite. It was an exciting introduction to the South-west. These mountains belonged to the much-admired Frenchmans Cap Range, round the base of which flows the wild river that was at the focus of Australia's greatest-ever conservation battle, between 1978 and 1983—the Franklin. We were to pass to the east of this area down the length of the trackless King William Range, and on through further trackless country to the Denison Range. At the northern end of the King William Range we climbed steeply to the

summit, only to find four men and a helicopter already there! They were servicing the communication aerial attached to the fire look-out tower, and they were the last people we were to see for 12 days.

On the King William Range we were forced to scrub bash through large dense stands of the deciduous beech. A small tree or large shrub, this southern beech, which is endemic to the mountains of western and central Tasmania, is the only native deciduous tree in southern Australia. Attractive as it was in its dark green summer garb, we could only wonder at the bright gold and russet it would afford in late April.

We passed quickly along the wild high alpine moorland on the top of the range, for fear of being trapped in the notoriously changeable weather of the South-west. Apart from an arm of the Hydro-Electric Commission's impoundment, Lake King William, the views are of total wilderness. To the west and south-west are numerous deep valleys filled with near-impenetrable forest and scrub which would block an explorer's path as effectively as any mountain range.

The Prince of Wales Range, the upper Denison River valley, and the spectacular Spires Range form a trackless wilderness of a quality unsurpassed in Australia, yet they have been excluded from the

**Below.** Ernie Bond's homestead at Gordonvale in the Vale of Rasselas, now lies ruined, destroyed by the elements in only 30 years. **Right.** Kerrie Maclean on the wild moorland of the trackless King William Range.



Franklin-Lower Gordon Wild Rivers National Park, which forms part of the World Heritage Area. The boundary of this National Park was drawn up at the time of the Franklin-Lower Gordon conservation dispute, and it is a reflection of political considerations. The Wilderness Society, the organization which spearheaded the successful campaign to stop the damming of these wild rivers for hydroelectricity, continues a campaign to have such areas included in an enlarged Western Tasmanian National Park.

Luckily for us, our route off the King William Range was to the east, into a valley containing large areas of button grass. Button grass, a hummock-sedge, is the dominant species in large tracts of the South-west, particularly in areas of low fertility, high fire frequency and poor drainage. Although the hummocks may be over a metre tall, making progress awkward, they are in general lower than this, and by carefully picking a route across the plain, the thickest forest and scrub can be avoided.

In teeming rain, we crossed the plain on compass bearings, encountering no sign of any previous human presence. Then, surprisingly, we came upon an old encampment and, shortly after, the first of two air strips cut in the valley in the early 1970s as part of a dubious mining exploration venture.

We continued southwards to wide open hills covered with ankle-high button grass and springy heath plants, and reached the steep slopes of the Denison Range. Thunderous gale force winds and cold lashing rain kept us tent-bound for a day and a half. Even though the mountains are not high by world standards (the Denison Range peaks at about 1,200 metres), their position in the prevailing water-laden westerlies ensures a wet and cool climate most of the year.

Finally we raced over the top of the range in a three-hour lull between storms to descend to one of the jewels of the South-west, Lake Rhona. A sub-alpine lake tucked under the gigantic cliffs of Reeds Peak, Lake Rhona is famous for its beautiful pink-white sandy beach. Tragically, the lake shore was burned out in November 1982 as a result of a fire spreading from a nearby 'controlled' burn-off organized by a logging company and Tasmanian government authorities to protect a nearby forest concession. Recovery of vegetation at this altitude is very slow, and the area still looks devastated. We left Lake Rhona with heavy hearts.

In the nearby Vale of Rasselas, a wide, sweeping flat valley of button grass and eucalypt forest, we came upon Gordonvale, the old ruined homestead of Ernie Bond. Initially a miner at nearby Adamsfield, Ernie, a gentle giant with an

enormous capacity for hard work, set up a farm at Gordonvale, raising sheep and cattle, and growing copious quantities of vegetables and fruit, as well as keeping bees. The bushwalkers of the 1940s have fond memories of Ernie's wallaby stew and home-baked bread, washed down with his famed mead, as well as of the genial and thoughtful qualities of the man himself. Despite his isolation, Ernie had a keen interest in the outside world, particularly in political affairs. He once walked for several hours to the mining settlement of Adamsfield in order to cast a vote, only to find that he had arrived a day too late! In 1950 the bridge over the nearby Gordon River burned down and was only replaced by an aerial cableway. This was no use for carrying stock in and out of Gordonvale so, reluctantly, Ernie gave up his farm in the wilderness and returned to Hobart. Today only Ernie's post-and-rail fences and an old shed are left standing.

To the south of Gordonvale, we picked up the old corded pack-track which runs from the Florentine River crossing to the old osmiridium-mining town of Adamsfield. The track is almost totally obscured in places by fallen trees, and the wooden cordage is heavily clothed by dangerously slippery mosses and algae. It is no longer a pleasure to walk, despite the silent beauty of the rainforest. Adamsfield has only one resident today, yet in its early days as a mining settlement, in 1925-6, it boasted up to 2,000 townspeople and, no doubt, an aura of permanence.

Modern times saw the total decline of the township and Nature has now virtually reclaimed it all. The only places remaining unchanged are those where the soil was totally removed, as in the case of some tracks and the mine itself.

We had seen no sunshine for six days and with threatening black clouds descending ever lower, we shouldered our packs to continue south to our next food depot. For the following two days we marched along the 37 kilometres of the unsealed Scotts Peak Road which was constructed by the Hydro-Electric Commission in the late 1960s as part of the Middle Gordon Scheme. It runs through some fine country, allowing tourists and trout fishermen rapid access to Lake Pedder and the heart of the South-west; the scheme also provides an appreciable power input to the Tasmanian grid. But it was built at a cost. The original Lake Pedder, with its enormous sandy beach and unique ecosystem, was destroyed, and the South-west has been left

Strangely primitive-looking peaks rose from undulating moors like ancient sailing ships.

with scars across the landscape in the form of wide unsealed roads and enormous quarry sites. These areas have been left totally without soil, and it will be a long time before vegetation once more makes them acceptable to the eye—the lesson of Adamsfield has not been learned.

At this stage, the weather deteriorated even further. Squally hail showers and gale-force winds gave way to constant lashing rain and, above the 600 metre mark, to heavy snow. All this in early March, supposedly still summer!

After a few days' rest, to allow the swollen rivers and creeks to fall, we commenced the last section of our walk, along the Port Davey Track into the Southwest National Park. This area has been much visited and inhabited by humans in the past, yet today it remains essentially a wilderness with no roads, few tracks, only one tiny settlement and hundreds of square kilometres of wild mountains, forests and plains, framed by a magnificent coastline. The original Port Davey Track was cut in 1898 as an escape route for shipwrecked sailors; it was extremely well made, being thoughtfully contoured and carefully benched into hillsides. Today most of the track still follows the original route. We tramped across open button-grass plains for most of the way, passing copses of eucalypts which rang with birdsong. However, we encountered only one tiny patch of rainforest on the track, an indication of the high frequency of wildfires in the area, caused initially by the fire management of the South-west Aboriginal tribe and more recently by European Tasmanians.

Patches of rainforest away from the track have survived and in some cases they contain genetic and ecological treasure-troves. One such patch we visited was almost encircled by button-grass plain, yet it had remained unburned for countless centuries. In its midst were dozens of the magnificent endemic Huon pine, a tree which has become world-famous for the easy workability and rot-proof characteristics of its timber. For boat-building its wood is unsurpassed. The Huon pine was once the focus of a large industry in the South-west, with 'piners' and their families establishing a population of over 50 at Settlement Point on Port Davey. By 1879, however, the pines had been over-exploited, and the government stepped in to regulate their felling. Today, large pines are few, and we were delighted to see several mature trees, one of them well over a thousand years old.



The wildlife in this area is not as abundant as in other parts of western Tasmania, but at the Spring River we were lucky enough to have a close daylight encounter with an unusually tame tiger-cat which came almost up to us, clearly hoping that we had food to offer. A reddish-brown marsupial carnivore, about the size of a cat, this species is not often seen.

We reached the rowing-boat crossing at the Bathurst Narrows, where the tide rips through a 200 metre gap between Port Davey and Bathurst Harbour. This magnificent waterway, an old river valley which has been invaded by the sea, is a sailor's paradise, affording safe anchorages and almost unparalleled scenic splendour. However, it is protected from yachting hordes by the wild and treacherous coast beyond its mouth. While we were at Port Davey, an old sailing schooner, the *Eye of the Wind*, arrived; it is now a tourist operation, taking the adventurous to some of the remoter parts of the South Pacific.

We continued across the plains under a burning sun, on a day on which the temperature was to reach 38°C, to the small tin-mining settlement and airstrip at Melaleuca. Charles King took up a mining lease here in 1941, and his son Denny has carried on the operations. The ore is taken by boat to Hobart and by rail to Launce-

ton for marketing. The other mine is run by Peter and Barbara Willson, who were attracted to the area in the mid-1970s by its remoteness and beauty. Their operation involves the recovery of ore close to the surface and the subsequent return of the overburden to the mined site. This ensures minimal visual and ecological impact on the region. Indeed, the vegetation grows more rapidly on the mined sites due to improved drainage.

Denny King has made a great contribution to bushwalkers by building two spacious and comfortable huts on the banks of Melaleuca Inlet. We spent a few days at one of these, meeting other walkers and swapping tales of the bush. While there, we were able to view flocks of the rare, endangered orange-bellied parrot which breeds in only a few localities in the South-west. In 1981 a wildlife population census revealed a total of only 150 birds. The Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service is continuing research into the species, along with authorities in South Australia and Victoria.

We finally reached the Southern Ocean at the beach of New Harbour on a blustery overcast day. A wide sweep of golden sand hemmed in by impressive headlands and backed by forest, it is typical of Tasmania's south coast. We looked past jagged sea rocks to the horizon—the next land to the south is Antarctica. •

## Wild Ski Touring

Spring skiing  
on Victoria's  
Bogong High  
Plains, with  
Glenn Tempest

# The Painters



• USUALLY REGARDED AS A POPULAR walk in summer, the Bogong Village-Painters-Niggerheads-Falls Creek trip is one of the most beautiful and lonely ski touring excursions in Victoria. The last week of the school holidays found Jenny and I loitering our way up to the hills via a number of compelling side-trips, including the Brown Brothers winery and the excellent pub in Harrietville. Despite our forebodings, the next day dawned as perfect as the day before, with hardly a cloud in the sky. Some last-minute shopping in Mt Beauty and a little more



'loitering' meant that we did not arrive at Bogong Village until after lunchtime. Strapping skis to packs, Walkmans to waist-belts, and last, but not least, filling the Sigg bottle with wine, and we were ready.

Starting about 200 metres uphill from the entrance to Bogong Village, the Fainter Fire Track meanders its way for about five kilometres up to Spring Saddle. This easy walk is all the more enjoyable as the views of the East Kiewa valley unfold about you. Spring Saddle is situated at about the 1,200 metre level, and during the mid-season it is usually under snow; in September, however, no snow was to be seen, until at a bend in the track at the 1,300 metre level it suddenly appeared. We put on our skis, and made good time after this. The sun was low as we glided into Bogong Jack Saddle. We dropped our packs, and put up the tent as the horizon through the snow gums gradually turned crimson. The summit of Mt Fainter reflected the colour of the setting sun long after we were in darkness.

Next morning was yet another glorious day. After spending most of the morning exploring the saddle, we finally set off up the continuation of the Fainter Track. The

Mt Fainter North dominates the tranquil setting of Bogong Jack Saddle—a popular campsite for ski tourers. **Above**, majestic Mt Feathertop, and Mt Hotham, far left, seen from Mt Fainter North. All photos Glenn Tempest

gums began to thin, giving us magnificent views of Mt Bogong and Spion Kopje. The brooding mass of Bogong seemed to dominate everything; its interlinked gullies and ridges created a complicated chain of rounded snow domes. The track finally merged with the steep snow slopes, and we left the tree line behind. Jenny skied enthusiastically up toward the north summit of Fainter, whilst I took photographs. When I joined her, we sat for some time taking in the views. The snow-covered West Kiewa valley separated us from the spectacular north-easterly aspect of Mt Featherst. From its sharp-corniced summit a series of snow ridges



Not your average resort scene—on Mt Fainter South.

dropped steeply some 300 metres or so into the tree line. Trailing behind, the Razorback meandered up and down to Mt Hotham.

Fifteen minutes later we skied on to the south summit of Fainter. At 1,883 metres, some 40 metres higher than its north summit, it was the highest point on the trip. In the distance we could clearly see the Mt Howitt and Mt Stirling areas. We took a few more photographs and then skied off down long moderate slopes to Little Plain. It was quite late when we pitched the tent amongst a quiet stand of snow gums, and a clear starry sky promised yet another cold night. The camp fire, constructed on a log base on the snow, kept the chill off until it was time to retire to the warmth of the sleeping bags.

Next morning we waited for the sun to strike the tent before we rose. The water was frozen, and it took will-power to pull on frozen boots and cold clothes. Another superb day with perfect snow conditions allowed us to ski back to the south peak for a number of long runs.

Many excellent descents of all levels of difficulty put the Fainters firmly amongst the better cross country downhill skiing areas in Victoria. The westerly aspects in particular offer some very long steep gullies of the highest standard, though they are sometimes prone to icy conditions. Back at the tent by lunchtime, we felt very pleased with ourselves.

Early that afternoon we packed up and left, skiing south towards the Niggerheads.

It was very still and quiet, gliding between the snow gums and across the numerous small plains. Instead of taking a direct route to the Tawonga Huts we decided to ski via the summit of Mt Niggerhead (1,852 metres) on the way. The final climb between scattered snow gums and rocky outcrops was steep, but the views were worth the detour: Mt Buffalo was silhouetted against a watery sun, casting shadows across the valleys and ridges, and Diamantina Spur stood out, changing colour in the evening light. The snow was becoming icy so we skied down towards the Tawonga Huts. In the shadow the snow turned to solid ice, and Jenny, not having skis with metal edges, found the descent particularly difficult.

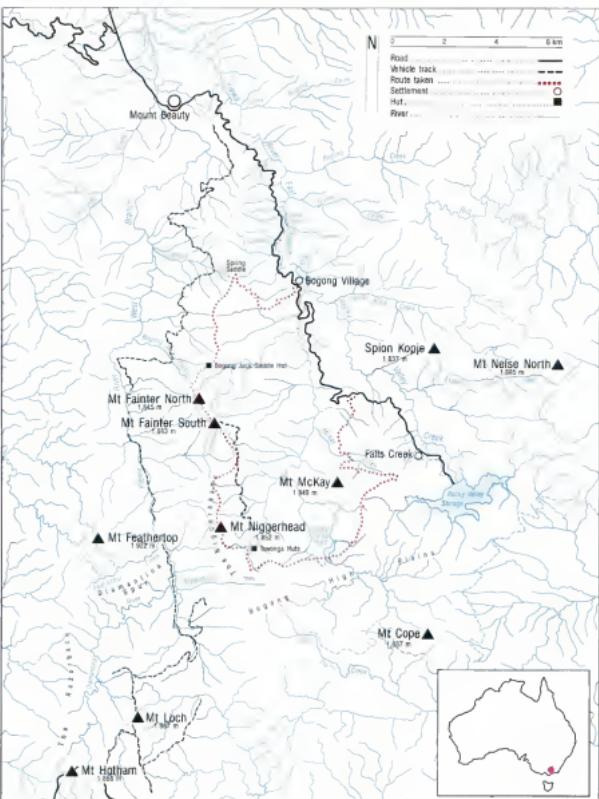
After numerous spectacular falls we reached the creek. Here the snow was softer, and we skied down through open timber. The Tawonga Huts comprise four cattlemen's huts, two of which are usually open to skiers during the winter months. The plain in which the huts stand is divided by numerous creeks and has fine

views of Mt Bogong to the north.

Next morning we awoke to yet more perfect weather. From the huts we followed the approximate route of the Fainter Fire Track (not poled) in an easterly direction to Pretty Valley pondage. Crossing the pondage we continued up to the SEC huts, stopping briefly for lunch. Half an hour later we arrived at the pole line to Ruined Castle, overlooking part of the Falls Creek ski resort. The crowded slopes and the roar of tow machines provided a strong contrast to the quiet and lonely environment through which we had been travelling. From Ruined Castle we turned left, on to Howmans Gap Road. The final run was superb: we skied over the bridge at McKay Creek, and through the tall timber that lined the road. After five kilometres the snow ended. Strapping the skis to our packs, we walked the last kilometre into Howmans Gap. •

Glenn Tempest (see contributors in *Wild* no 4) has been a Special Adviser to *Wild* since our second issue. A renowned climber and mountain photographer, Glenn is also an experienced and enthusiastic cross country skier.

## Mt Fainter



# AUSTRALIAN HIMALAYAN SUCCESS

This year Australians returned safely from three major Himalayan objectives: two parties pioneered difficult new routes, and another narrowly failed to reach the third-highest summit on Earth.

Graeme Hill's party made the first ascent of the spectacular South-west

Pillar of Shivling in a bold 14-day ascent.

Pakistan's Gasherbrum IV is one of the world's most beautiful mountains. Unclimbed since its first ascent in 1958, Greg Child and Everest summiteer, Tim Macartney-Snape, reached its summit by making the first ascent of its North-west Ridge.

Michael Groom's small expedition to Kangchenjunga (8,598 metres) climbed to within 200 metres of the summit of this Himalayan giant.

Three key participants describe these climbs in this *Wild* feature. *Wild* is proud to have been an official sponsor of the Gasherbrum IV and Kangchenjunga climbs.



AUSTRALIAN  
HIMALAYAN  
SUCCESS

# SHIYLING SOJOURN

by Steve Coates

Rock climbing on  
the Matterhorn at  
the end of the  
ice age, 1995



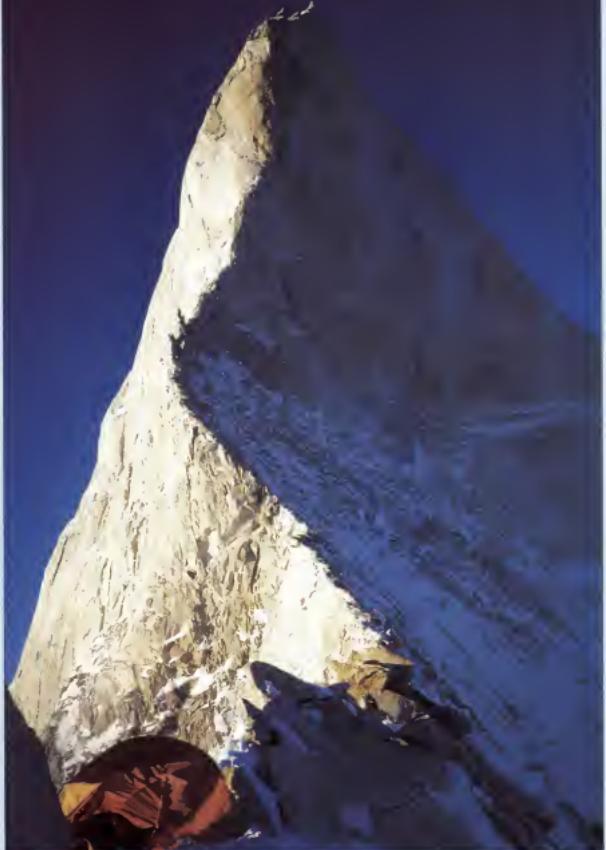
• THE WATER SLOshed around my knees, threatening to drag me down into its swirling, muddy depths. It was the second time I had bathed my kneecaps in the purifying waters of the sacred Ganges in 12 days. Bri followed, leaning heavily on her ski pole as the current and slippery rocks destabilized her small mass. I had previously offered her a piggy-back ride across the river as an enticement to get her moving again after a harrowing two days of walking in deep snow, most of it with very little food, but the ferocity of the slimy water, combined with its extremely low temperature, precluded the free transport system across the Ganges. We were returning from Utterkashi after we had interrupted our expedition to report to the authorities on the death of our liaison officer some 10 days earlier. Dr Vahanwati had died in a dramatic manner while attempting to ascend a fixed rope during our attempt on the original route on Shivling. The death shook me, and brought to my attention the dangers of panic at high altitude, where every breath is an effort, and a cool head really pays off in a tricky situation.

Snow had been falling heavily for four days, roughly a metre of it here at Gamuk where we were now floundering, and close to one-and-a-half metres at Advance Base Camp where it had drifted deep enough to crush and completely bury one of our tents. Jon and Veronique had remained at Advance Base to battle out the worst storm we had yet experienced in the Gangotri area. High winds and extremely deep snow meant that the only surviving tent, a Fairydome Trilogy, had to be dug out every couple of hours or it too would be reduced to broken-poled rubbish housing two highly irritated and suffocating people.

The return journey was proving cold and difficult, as I had left Base Camp in a pair of nylon shorts and rubber gumboots on a nice sunny day, leaving my much-abused, smelly long johns to fend for themselves. On returning, we found that the moraines had been buried completely, and most of our time was consumed in falling down holes between boulders, and ploughing a waist-deep trench up the lateral moraine towards Base Camp.

Base Camp was located on Tappoond, a supposedly grassy field on the side of the Gangotri Glacier, but now deeply buried in snow. Here we had pitched our tents at 4,400 metres and installed our cook, Gunga, under a large rock, called the kitchen, where he spent most of his days fiddling with the Primus and trying to cook the Sahibs' curried vegetables and *chai*. It had been three weeks now since our trekkers had departed for places unknown—'Towards Tibet'; they had murmured before leaving us to get on with climbing the mountain.

Four of us had planned to climb the original route on Shivling, leaving Jon to solo his planned new route of the Southwest Pillar. I remembered looking at some slides he had of the route taken during his



The South-west Buttress of Shivling rears up like an enraged cobra over the first bivouac site. *Left*, Graeme Hill belaying near the top of the prow, high on the route. *Page 43*, Brigitte Muir (left), Jon Muir and Graeme Hill on the West Summit of Shivling. All photos: Jon Muir collection

previous attempt, last year. We were sitting in his lounge room listening to his commentary on how far he had got on the ridge. From what I could see, he did not even get within shouting distance of the crux; a gendarmerie-like buttress of smooth-looking granite sprouting out of the ridge for a few hundred metres. It looked like hard rock climbing elevated to 6,500 metres, with all the troubles of altitude and cold to contend with. I scoffed and pointed to the buttress, commenting to my rock climbing mate that it would take him a month of warm Sundays and a bag full of chalk, even if he could find a line that 'goes'.

I put these memories out of my mind and continued with the work at hand, picking what looked like a good line up the snow-covered boulders and swearing loudly at every cavernous hole I fell into. The job was greatly aided soon after by a party of Indians. Just as it was Bri's turn to take over the lead we noticed them

heading towards us. Like a team of bulldozers they had carved a track from near our Base Camp down to us. We were grateful for the work they had done as we could now stroll leisurely back along their track. What would have been another four or five hours of desperate step plugging turned into two hours' pleasant walking.

Dressed in the latest fashion of pile jacket and floral skirt (to stop sunburn only), I stumbled into Base Camp with Bri. Ravenous, I ordered my staple diet of rice pudding (which was usually curry flavoured) from Gunga. I could put away kilograms of the stuff even with its odd flavouring, but had little hope of devouring his curried dishes. Most refused to go down, and if they did they had an alarming tendency to come screaming out the other end, usually late at night when the temperature was well below zero.

Base Camp was also occupied by Jon and Veronique, who had had an epic eight-hour battle through chest-deep snow the previous day after abandoning Advance Base to the elements.

Next day we held a conference, and decided that we would try Jon's new route as a group of three, 'capsule style', fixing

our limited number of static and climbing ropes up the initial face to the ridge, transporting enough food and equipment up to the high point and then 'going for it'. 'Going for it' conjured up visions of endless cold nights perched on small rock or ice ledges trying not to drop dinner over each other and slowly sliding off during the night. I was not relishing the thought. It would be a hard time transporting loads along the ridge and up the buttress, much

our cache of gear which had been buried by avalanches. He somehow managed to locate the cache at a depth of at least six metres. It was a lucky break, as we were depending on the recovery of this equipment to proceed with the expedition.

The first day's climbing consisted of running out 160 metres of rope on snow angled at up to 45° and sometimes knee-deep. The first 100 metres was not too bad, but when I did not reach anything I

pieces of rock protruding, and even fewer runners to protect me in the event of a fall. Progress was slow and delicate, and I spent what seemed like hours picking my way up the brittle ice balancing on my crampon points, making sure each move was made accurately and executed with the utmost precision. It was late in the afternoon by the time we had climbed the rock band and were traversing a steep slope of green water-ice looking for anchors to fix our ropes to. Snow swirls swirled around me and the temperature was dropping with every hour. A couple of outcrops looked promising, so I picked one and headed for it. Traversing without any runners on ice which had the consistency of concrete made things a bit slow, but I soon found the required anchors and, in the mounting storm, managed to abseil down to our fixed ropes. The rock band had been cracked. I estimated that only five or six pitches remained from our high-point to the ridge and that if we pulled up some of the ropes from the bottom of the route we would have enough to completely fix to the ridge.

The next climbing day Bri somehow ended up on the blunt end of the rope, with Jon taking the lead. I had the job of dragging up the bottom ropes and of Jumaring up to the high-point before they ran out of rope. This is one of the most exhausting tasks on an expedition, and by the time I got to Bri I had amassed an 80 litre pack full of rope and food. I could barely manage it, but I had at least cleared most of the dumps made by others on the way up. All that remained to carry to the ridge were a couple of fuel containers, weighing about ten kilograms, and some food.

We had planned for a stay on the mountain, after reaching the ridge, of about 15 days. This called for a lot of food and fuel, as well as spare items, such as stoves and gloves. If we lost one critical item, such as our stove or cooking pot, we would have to abandon the expedition if we did not have a spare, so we gritted our teeth and pressed on with enormous loads.

After fixing rope to the ridge we planned to return to Advance Base for a rest before striking out with only our personal gear to make our first camp on the ridge and pulling all the ropes up after us. Somehow this did not work out. A storm dumped so much snow we could not walk back up to the start of the ropes, and then we ran out of food and fuel at Advance Base, causing a rapid retreat down the glacier to Base Camp for a big 'pig out' session, and a rest from the effects of altitude.

Five days later we were on the ridge, Jon's eagle eyes picking out a snow patch big enough and level enough, after some treatment, to pitch our tent fly. The system of fly and poles worked extremely well and enabled us to leave the two-person inner tent behind and have a three-person shelter adequate for all but the severest storms. This tent site was the only one we found on the whole route. No other position offered nearly enough space for three people to lie down together. (But it did not

A leader's-eye-view from the crux pitch (grade 21.4A) on the eleventh day. Brigitte Muir (left) and Graeme Hill are at the third bivouac site and have moved out of the line of fire to avoid rockfall from this ferociously loose pitch. Right, Brigitte Muir on the summit ridge in an awesome setting.

of it done on mechanical ascenders, and I had seen what they could do to an unsuspecting climber at high altitude.

The return to Advance Base was much the same as most glacier walks I had done in New Zealand, extremely hot and exhausting. The walk was marked only by the knee-deep snow and the Indian body-recovery party of ten. The Indians politely refused to plug any steps, saying that they would instead camp the night on the glacier in the middle of nowhere and go to our Advance Base the next day before proceeding up the mountain to collect Dr Vahavant's corpse.

The location of Advance Base was marked by a few broken tent poles protruding from the otherwise blanket-smooth covering of snow. Everything else had been flattened and buried, and the first few hours after arriving were spent digging out the surviving tent and stomping a site for another.

Jon had already climbed a couple of hundred metres and had fixed ropes for an easier return. Bri and I were elected to go up the next fine day and proceed with the job of fixing as much rope as possible. Jon would go with us to the bergshrunf where he was to attempt to dig out

could use to belay, Bri had to tie on another 60 metres. I could manage half this length of rope, but it was soon more than I could drag through the snow. Having sighted a likely-looking piece of rock, I pulled up ten metres of rope and anchored it with my ice axe. Climbing up to the rock and finding it blank, I had to repeat the manoeuvre, this time using my helmet as an anchor by filling it with snow and burying it in the slope. The last ten metres of rope enabled me to reach a rock slab covered with a couple of millimetres of snow. Fortunately this slab yielded a peg crack to anchor the end of the rope. This done, I slid back down the ropes to join Bri who, for three hours, had been standing in an ice step and tied to a couple of Friends. We both then continued down to help Jon, who was lying head-first down a hole in the snow trying to dig out frozen tangled ropes at the bottom of the shrund.

Climbing days were generally followed by rest days, and it was not until two days later that we were elected to go up again and continue the job. Ahead of us lay a rock band that barred the way to the upper slopes. We planned to climb this by a circuitous route and then drop the rope directly over the buttress in line with the previous fixed ropes. The line I chose gave me the most difficult mixed climbing on the route. It was extremely thin brittle ice over very steep slabs, with only a few



really matter, as on the fifth day on the ridge I picked up my pack after Jon had rummaged through it. When the tent fly plunged off down the face never to be seen again I realized that the pack lid had not been done up.) The next three nights were spent in the tent. Each day Bri and I would go out and fix rope along the ridge, returning late in the afternoon when the cloud rolled in, thankful for the fixed rope to aid in an easy descent.

On our fourth day on the ridge we all moved up with our personal gear. Our

bridging got steeper and finally led to a short overhang which was disposed of with a few quick layback moves, a technique more suited to rockclimbing at home on Mt Keira than here at 6,000 metres. Thankfully the rest was vertical or just under, and the rock improved dramatically, giving a good belay. The next pitch led easily up to the start of the buttress, where a vague line traversed right, hopefully to a good ledge. After getting another rope tied on to the end of my rope, I led off across the traverse. Rope drag increased as the difficulty of climbing forced me to put in more runners. At one point I found myself dangling from my hands with my feet resting against the smooth granite with no footholds. Strength is a precious commodity up there and a few strenuous moves was about all I could take before going into the red line. After three more wild slaps I reached a foothold and, breathing like a steam train, I fiddled a couple of runners into an opposition placement and clipped my waist sling into them for a rest. I was only half-way across the traverse, but could see enough holds to make the rest of the job easier.

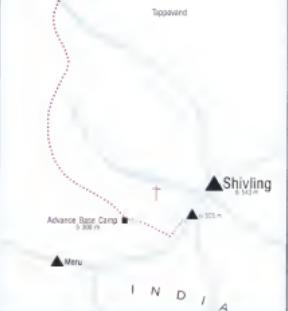
The last part of the traverse was on a ledge big enough to crawl along but covered with rock flakes which I promptly



Jon Muir at work during his seven-hour lead of the crux pitch. Bright Muir took this photo from where she is pictured on page 46.

'capsule' was on its way. We had fixed about 550 metres of rope and were now looking for a campsite and a place to call home for the next few days. Jon stayed at the rear filming, and doing the heavy work of rope retrieval and load ferrying. He was our 'tail-end turkey' and was well suited to the job, being able to carry a bigger pack than Bri or I and having huge lungs. Bri and I climbed and searched for a tent site, but after a few hours hacking water-ice from a promising ledge we had to abandon it and abseil back to Jon, who was close to a couple of small bivvy sites. I soon settled down for a reasonable night's sleep, tied on to a couple of good anchors and wedged between two rocks, with my feet higher than my head.

The next day I led off up the steepening buttress. This part of the ridge led up to the pillar which, Jon assured us, had a line on its right-hand side. The climbing was getting trickier, and I had changed into my friction boots to aid progress. With a light rack of gear I bridged off up the next pitch, pushing as much as I could rather than pulling on anything that looked loose. The granite was badly shattered in places, and the runners were mostly placed behind suspicious-looking flakes, but I reasoned that if I had enough of them one would hold before I hit my belayer. The



dispatched over the edge until I could make my way along it. The ledge at the end made a reasonable bivy for two and a poor site for one more. Bri took nearly an hour to follow the pitch and once she got to the ledge never went back along it. I, on the other hand, had to put in seven laps during the four days we spent on the ledge. Going back to pick up descending lines and so it was easier to free climb with a sling clipped into the fixed rope. This proved desperate and I risked frozen fingers by the time I finished. Going back

the other way I could use a mechanical ascender—still scary above a 1,000 metre drop, but easier on the arms and fingers. While I ferried gear Jon got on with climbing the crux pitch, aid climbing up shaky flakes was tedious and scary, and with less than four hours of sunlight a day it also turned out to be a very cold ordeal.

Two days were spent nutting and hammering our way upwards on the one 50 metre pitch, and it was not until late on the second day that I heard a jubilant yell to 'get your arse up here—it's free-climbing time'. A quick Jumar to the high point, collecting a rock on the head on the way up, and we were off again. Good solid rock and a fine line of cracks up a steep leaning ramp led to a small roof with a crack running through it. I stopped there and fixed the rope, giving the next pitch to Jon, who scoffed at my idea of free climbing the roof into unknown ground. A few discreet pulls and steps in slings and he was off again up the long corner system to the ridge. We anchored the rope at the top of the buttress and descended into the cold shadows to our side of the mountain and our last night on the ledge.

An early start the next day meant that we got out of bed at nine o'clock, but nothing productive ever happened until at least 10, by which time the sun had reached us. Packing our gear meant sorting it into the lightest loads possible, and on doing this we found there were quite a few items that could not be carried, such as nine litres of fuel and another five days' food. We were going to try for the top and move our 'capsule' up for the last time. This of course meant jettisoning everything that would not go on our backs. We left the food and fuel on the ledge, but the ropes, spare stove, overpants, books and kitchen sink were all packed into a kit bag and I crossed the traverse for the sixth time to throw the bag 1,500 metres down 'our' side of the mountain. 'Irish weight-saving', I thought, recalling an article in *Mountain* magazine, and cut the rope, sending the kit bag tumbling into the abyss below. I had just rid us of at least 30 kilograms of excess baggage Thai Airways would not have to carry back for us. Halfway through its fall the bag exploded, sending gear spewing across the face of the mountain, most of it being buried in the ensuing avalanche. An hour or so of Jumaring got us established on the summit ridge, and being the only person with friction boots (the others went down with the bag), I had the task of leading the remaining five pitches to the top. Good rock and interesting moves made the day a memorable one. The only drawback was the tremendous weight of my pack which made it difficult to do the moves, and my rockclimbing technique had to change radically to cope with the extra weight, the 'no-fall' situation, and the altitude. By the end of the day we had reached the summit, a flat platform of granite guarded by a frieze of overhangs. After nine days of continuous effort I was excited and vastly relieved to reach this point. •

# GASHERBRUM IV

*Tim Macartney-Snape's account of a new route on one of the world's most beautiful mountains*

● WALTER BONATTI AND CARLO MAURI'S gear shone brightly in the morning sun. Three karabiners clipped into three pegs with a weathered, sun-bleached rope joining them was the only sign of the mountain's first ascensionists. We had just become the second, but unlike them we were doing our best to leave nothing behind. Our long descent back down the North-west Ridge of Gasherbrum IV was going to require all the gear we had with us. In our enthusiasm to make the ascent we had been a little over-zealous in lightening our loads, and our worry now was that getting down would require more pitons and slings than we had with us.

We were traversing back to the North Summit below the many-peaked crest of the summit ridge. The climbing here was not difficult, but the feeling of climbing over loose limestone with such a fantastic

feeling of impatience that I always feel when the spectre of roped climbing appears. Throughout the climb I had been impressed by my companions' concern

an overwhelming jumble of peaks. I looked down upon what to me was unknown territory, and felt poor. How rich one could be to know a fraction of those nameless



Summiteers Tim Macartney-Snape, left, and Greg Child in front of Gasherbrum IV. Right, Tom Hall-Hargis, left, and Greg Child arriving at the summit. Behind are Broad Peak (8,056 metres) and the world's second-highest mountain, K2 (8,611 metres). All photos Tim Macartney-Snape collection

space below us prodded our altitude-befuddled minds into considering each move very seriously. My companions, Tom Hall-Hargis and Greg Child, insisted on roping up whilst we traversed the trickiest section of shattered limestone. I was last, and as I fled into the end of the rope Tom was already pushing ahead towards the North Summit. It was easy to succumb to the immediate needs of our bodies—they cried out for warmth, rest and fluid, having been deprived of them for two days. To find a sunny niche out of the wind to fall asleep in was deliciously tempting. The real long-term solution to this dilemma was getting down, but the mere thought of this gargantuan task heightened our discomfort, and began to intensify the

for safety, but now I felt peeved at the delay that this extra precaution was causing. So when I reached the piton which was the only device attaching both Greg and I to Gasherbrum IV I began taking it out with a zeal fired by impatience. Greg was belaying me with the rope running round the shaft of his ice axe which he had firmly embedded in the wind-packed snow. 'I've never put too much faith in these things,' he commented on the belay, in the slow deliberate speech of high altitude, 'but I suppose it's better than nothing.' Greg is never one to give in lightly to bouts of optimism, so I felt safe enough. Nearly 3,000 metres below us the West Gasherbrum Glacier flowed away from the base of the mountain with a curve that described a subtle 's'. Half-way along its short course to the mighty Baltoro Glacier, which it joined at Concordia, was Base Camp, a tiny speck of human intrusion in a seemingly infinite world of mountains. For the past few days we had feasted our eyes on the world's greatest concentration of high mountains. In all directions, to the curved horizon (or was that an illusion?) and undoubtedly beyond, the earth's surface bristled with

peaks, and the valleys which lay hidden between them; to build that wealth though, required a heavy investment of time, just as, in the shorter term, descending from our mountain required more time than we would wish.

The soft steel piton stuck in its crack with the stubbornness of chewing gum when it sticks to your foot on a hot summer's day. The ice axe was not designed as a hammer, and even though mine did a good job of hammering loose the piton I had a hard time. With both hands I finally placed the pick of the ice axe in the eye of the piton and pulled vigorously sideways on the shaft. The levering action worked, and the piton flew out with a jerk that upset the delicate footing of my crampons. First the points of my right crampon skidded over the sloping ledge they had been perched on and the momentum swung my body around so that now my right foot began to pivot and then slither. I began to fall. It has always seemed unfair that whilst oxygen diminishes with altitude, the force of gravity seems to remain the same; and so with the full force of the Earth's gravitational pull I began accelerating

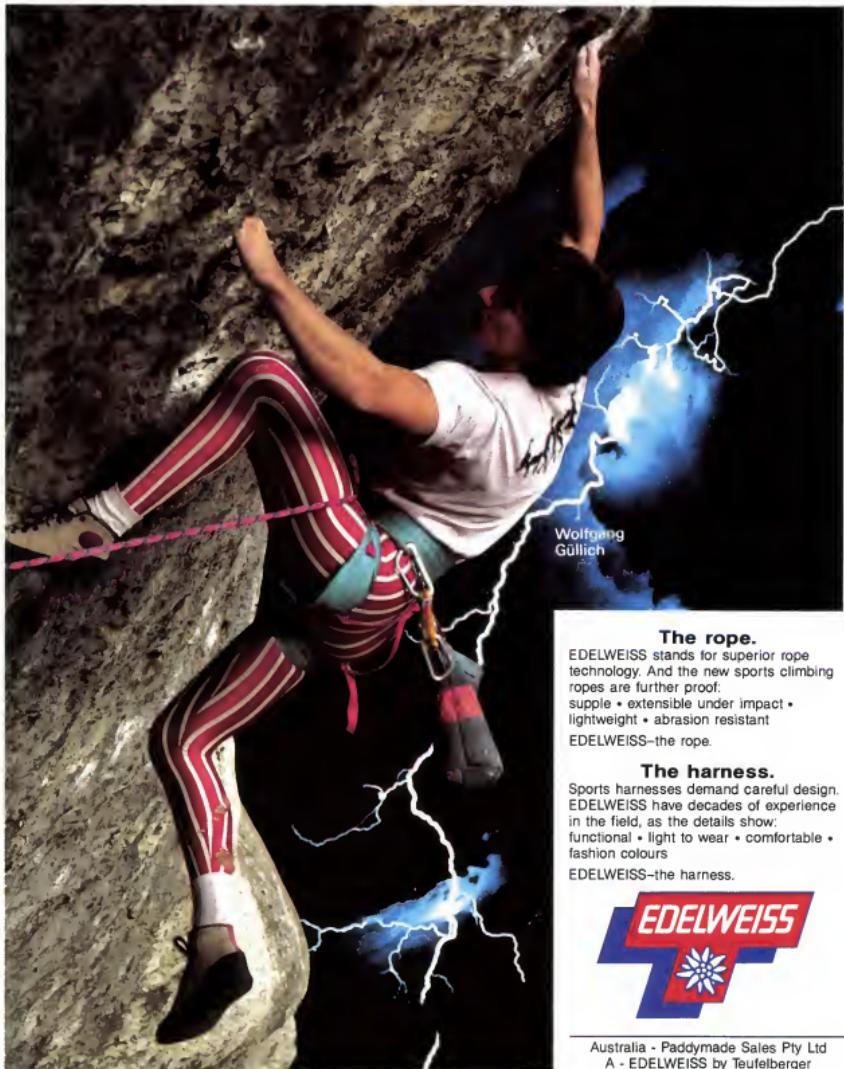


Tom Hall-Hargis,  
left, and Greg  
Child climbing  
in China, above  
Camp Four on  
the North-west  
Ridge of  
Gasherbrum IV,  
which is visible  
on the left.  
(Geoff Radford  
is between the  
camp and the  
top pair of  
climbers.) Tim  
Macartney-Snape

Australian  
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down the West Face, bouncing off rough protrusions of rock. The greatest adjustment one makes to the limitations of altitude is to slow down the pace of everything to such an extent that even one's concept of time slows down. Now the speed at which everything was happening to me came as a numbing shock. Looking back on it all, I can understand why there have been so many incidents at high altitude where simple falls that could have been arrested have ended in tragedy. Not that I could have done anything to stop myself. My only hope was in Greg, and my mind was occupied solely with the question of if and when he was going to stop me. My axe temporarily snagged on a rock and was torn from my hands. I fell faster. The thin green rope finally pulled taut and I came to a halt. I was breathless, tufts of down drifted out from tears in my down suit, and my ice axe was gone. Thanks Greg, I bleated hoarsely between breaths. But he did not hear, and an anxious call came down from him. He had visions of having to cope with a seriously injured companion. What could he do? Nothing much. Serious injury in that place would almost certainly have meant death, as it was hard enough getting one's own able body back down. Although we climbed as a team, each person took ultimate responsibility for himself. This thought struck home hard as we both pondered the situation. However, my strength flooded back and I was able to put Greg's mind at rest by climbing back up to him. I had only fallen about 20 metres. I don't believe it, these belays actually work. I even had time to pull in some slack. Are you okay? Greg seemed as nervous as I: but then he was tied to the other end of the rope.

Nearly two years before this, Greg, whom I had never met, wrote to me from his expatriate home in Seattle with the news that he had permission for Gasherbrum IV and that he would like Lincoln Hall and I to become part of the team. He was organizing an attempt on its unclimbed North-west Ridge. Karakoram, Fosco Maraini's classic account of the mountain's first ascent in 1958, had been a primary catalyst in starting my career as a mountaineer. Now with enough experience for a serious attempt, I had the chance to climb what I had always felt to be one of the world's most beautiful mountains. I could not resist. Lincoln, though, felt he had devoted too much time to expeditions in recent years and made his decision not to go, preferring to devote more time to developing his already remarkable talent as a writer. I was greatly disappointed, as all our experiences on high mountains had been shared, and over the course of seven expeditions we had developed a rare understanding between each other that seemed to go beyond the bonds of normal friendship and enabled us to form a perfect climbing partnership. Lincoln added sensible caution to my sometimes

shaky flashes of optimistic intuition, and his tremendous strength was always to be relied upon. Going without him was going to be a difficult and lonelier experience. There was only one other person available that I would have considered climbing with —Greg Mortimer. Greg's immense will-power, technical prowess and good nature had been major contributing factors to the success and happiness of two previous expeditions, so I was delighted when he agreed to come. Sadly, plans changed, and a few months before departure Greg suddenly found himself unable to go. I was

I have ever climbed with, and a relentless doer. If anything needed doing, Geoff had it done, or was already doing it before anyone else got around to thinking about it. I could never understand his penchant for his large, cumbersome-looking framed pack, but with it went some of the heaviest loads of the expedition.

Andy is from New Hampshire. He found that life as a building contractor is more satisfying than one as a geologist, so he builds houses for a living. He has a strong creative urge, and during the expedition his creativity was expressed in the sweet



Looking down the lower slopes of the couloir to Camp One, on the glacier, where temperatures ranged from -25°C at night to 50°C by day!

committed to going, with a team of unknown people, which could have been a very worrying concept, except for a brief meeting with Greg Child who made me believe that he would do as good a job as possible in choosing the right people. Happily, with good judgement and perhaps a little luck, he did a great job, and from the beginning when we all finally met in Islamabad, there was a feeling that the group had the right components to fit into a harmonious whole. After it was all over, the sadness we felt at farewelling each person was ample evidence that we had all become good friends over the previous ten weeks.

One of my pleasantest memories of the trip is climbing back up to Camp Three, after a prolonged rest at Base Camp, and being met by Geoff Radford and Andy Tuthill. They are both geologists. Geoff makes his living by doing geological work in the mountains of his home State of Alaska, where his mountaineering skills are often called upon to map inaccessible mountainsides. Like his namesake, with whom I had been on previous expeditions, he was one of the most unselfish people

Appalachian rhythm of his banjo, a frequent and pleasant sound at Base Camp.

He and Geoff formed a solid, hard-working pair who, as much as anyone, deserved to reach the summit. As I struggled up the last icy steps to the gentle slope of Camp Three, Geoff held out a flask of warm, sweet lime juice, which is what I had craved during the long six hours of Jumaring from Camp One. They then led me to the snow cave which they had completely remodelled. Almost two weeks before, Greg, Tom and I had begun digging the cave with visions of creating a palace, but, encountering hard digging and one of the worst storms of my experience, we had only managed a small, three-person affair. Geoff and Andy had come up in atrocious conditions and had enlarged it to the spacious five-person version of our dreams. We sat outside in the afternoon sun and marvelled at the spectacle of mountains that spread out before us, feeling bonded by sharing the experience and having shared the labour which enabled us to be there.

On every expedition I go on the weather is said to be abnormally bad, but I am beginning to suspect that is always the case in the high mountains. This season was no exception, for it snowed for 32 of

the 40-odd days we were at Base Camp and above. The late snows made waiting for storms to pass more bearable for me as there was good skiing to be done. The only other person with skis was our cameraman, Phil Balsdon, who had given up his job at a television station to help me in my attempt to film the climb. Without his knowledge and help that goal would never have been achieved. Although not a climber, Phil adapted well to expedition life and quickly mastered the art of jumaring and abseiling so that he could film at Camp One. The reason for

quent. His way of speaking bore a remarkable resemblance to John Wayne, something Randy delighted in teasing him about.

Randy Leavitt, the most brilliant technical climber in our group, did not fit my preconceptions of the young breed of Yosemite-bred climbers—no loud mouth, with a humble view of himself, and a sense of humour easily able to bridge the gap between American and Anglo-Australian concepts of humour, he was an easy person to like. Although his main reason for coming had been to climb

cramping but life-saving hole we had dug in the sugary snow. The cold that had penetrated our bones overnight still lingered. I felt that my thirst was like lying on a bed of needles.

We had a long way to go.

Base Camp was at 4,815 metres on the West Gasherbrum Glacier and, once established, the route to Camp One (5,610 metres) usually took five hours, and involved an 800 metre climb round an ice-fall to a cwm situated below the North-west Ridge.

From Camp One the route ascended a 900 metre couloir (45°–55°) to the col at the end of the North-west Ridge, where Camp Two was situated. Easier snow and ice slopes led up to Camp Three at 6,950 metres, where we stopped fixing ropes. Above Camp Three the ropes from the 1984 American attempt were dug out of the snow and used until their high point at 7,255 metres (also the approximate high-point reached by Leavitt and Risse on our expedition).

The summit bid was made from Camp Three by Child, Radford, Tuthill, Hall-Hargis and myself. At 7,315 metres we established Camp Four, and continued on the following day, hoping to reach the summit and bivouac on the way down. We left our bivouac gear at 7,620 metres after climbing several steep sections of ice.



Andy Tuthill near the top of the rock-band below the Northern Summit. He turned back from just above this point, having climbed the major difficulties.

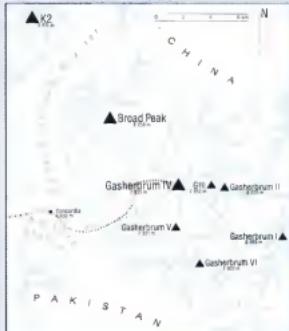
The film was partly my desire to create something more lasting than just doing a climb, and to appease the guilt I felt for spending three months away whilst my business partner, Steve Colman, was burdened with responsibilities I had temporarily shirked. A successful film would certainly be good public relations for our company. The other climbers had mixed reactions to having the added encumbrance of the film, but everyone was good-natured about it. Undoubtedly our best on-camera subject was Tom Hall-Hargis, a professional mountain guide from Seattle. You could not hope to have a stronger and more dependable person than Tom to take you anywhere. Tom has great physical strength in a body which he treats with liberal and constant doses of exercise. Bouldering at a campsite on the approach to Base Camp, I had been amazed to see him pull himself up an overhanging boulder, hand over hand, with his feet dangling free. His slow and deliberate manner of speech belied an active and agile brain, and whenever anything needed to be said in front of the camera, he was always the most elo-

Nameless Tower, he worked hard establishing the route on Gasherbrum.

The main function of our doctor, Steve Risse, was fortunately never needed on our climb. However, poor Steve certainly had his hands full on the wall in. His distinctive Wyoming drawl could be heard every afternoon at camp as he dealt with dozens of ailments. In Askole he almost certainly saved the life of a man suffering from chronic haemorrhaging, and at Urdurkas, amidst a crowd of onlooking porters, he extracted a rotten tooth. He was the best public relations man among us when it came to dealing with the porters. As we only had a limited amount of money and he a relatively unlimited quantity of medical power to give away, he was in a much better position to pander to their avaricious nature.

Greg and I hurried after Tom who was inching his way up to the North Summit. Now that the burning fire of ambition to reach the main summit had been appeased, we found it far harder to climb upwards; our bodies were leaden, our lungs felt too shallow, and our thirst was excruciating. Once over the North Summit we rested where the North-east Ridge joins our route of ascent, near where we had spent the night packed into a

## Gasherbrum IV



Radford turned back at 7,680 metres, below the summit rock-band. By 5 pm we had surmounted the rock, but as it seemed a long way to the summit a decision to bivouac without gear was made, and Tuthill turned back. The remaining three of us continued, and we dug a small snow cave just below the North Summit. We survived without injury and continued to the summit, reaching it at 9.30 am on 22 June, returning to Camp Four at 10 pm that night, and to Camp One at 5 pm the following day. •

Tim Macartney-Snape (see Contributors in Wild no 12) needs no introduction to Wild readers. Australia's most celebrated Himalayan mountaineer, he has made a number of significant first ascents, including the first Australian ascent of Mt Everest, by a new route, with Greg Mortimer in 1984.

• I PICKED UP PETER HILLARY'S letter for the second time and re-read his offer to take over his Kangchenjunga booking. As I had already made climbing plans, I had put his letter aside a couple of weeks earlier, but these plans suddenly fell through. After thinking about it for some time, I decided to give it a try. It was already the middle of October, and we would have to leave by early March.

Most of the paperwork and red tape was out of the way by Christmas and, apart from getting our airline tickets, nothing much could be done, as work took me to New Zealand for six weeks. Four

Camp—mainly climbing up and down high passes or along ridge-tops, gaining or losing as much as 1,000 metres each day. The weather had been good, and none of the expected porter problems arose when, on the thirteenth day, we arrived at Ramche, where we left the green grass to walk up the Yalang Glacier for the last two days to Base Camp. At Ramche we paid off 30 of our 46 porters, keeping 16 who were especially equipped for glacier travel. That night at Ramche it snowed, and continued, on and off, for the next

three days. It took a further 13 days to reach Base Camp, at 5,300 metres, with all of us shuffling loads up the now snow-covered glacier.

Chris and I started to find a way up to Camp One while James, Shane and Jim continued to help the porters bring loads up from the dumps on the glacier. Good progress was made in the following two weeks, with Camp One being set up at 6,100 metres and Camp Two at 6,600 metres. We used most of our 900 metres of fixed rope below Camp Two but, as it



Jim Van Gelder on the Great Shelf, with Jannu behind. Right, Kangchenjunga (8,598 metres), the world's third-highest mountain, from Ramche. All photos Michael Groom

other climbers—Chris Frost, Jim Van Gelder, Shane Chemello and James Strohfeldt—made up the rest of the team to attempt Kangchenjunga (8,598 metres) by its South-west Face.

It was to take us 15 days to reach Base



# HIMALAYAN APPRENTICESHIP

'Brisbane boys' make good on Kangchenjunga, almost; by *Michael Groom*



Jim Van Gelder, left, and Shane Chemella approaching the site of Camp Four, high on Kangchenjunga.

turned out, we did not need much above that.

While the others continued to stock Camps One and Two with food and fuel, and make progress towards Camp Three, I had my first rest day at Base Camp. Emerging from the mess tent at 3.30 pm, having spent most of the day there, I made my way across to the kitchen for tea and biscuits. However, Trising, our young cook, was eager to show me something and mumbled about a body as he rushed past. Within a few seconds he was squatting beside a large flat rock which was only about 15 metres from our kitchen. Hesitantly rounding the rock, I was confronted by the uncovered outline of a body steaming in the hot sun. Trising seemed quite pleased with his find as he poked it with a stick. I turned away, followed by Trising who ran after me with his hands clamped firmly over his nose and mouth. I instructed him to fill the 'grave', but stopped myself from adding 'and wash your hands before you cook dinner'.

Bad weather brought the others down to Base Camp from the higher camps, and it was not until 3 May that we all went back up to Camp Two with the intention of setting up Camps Three and Four and making an attempt on the summit; bad weather caught us at Camp Two and we descended to Base Camp again.

On 10 May the weather cleared and three of us headed back up, Chris and James having decided not to go up again. We made good progress that day and reached Camp Two. Next day, carrying only a tent and three days' food and fuel, we climbed new ground and set up Camp Three at 7,200 metres under a threatening sky. Fortunately the weather held, and the following day (12 May) Shane, Jim and I climbed to the Great Shelf, which we crossed, with little gain in altitude, and set up Camp Four at 7,700 metres in the last hour of daylight.

At 8.30 next morning I set off carrying only a water bottle and camera. Shane and Jim were content to better their personal altitude records and were to follow an hour or so later. I made good progress without a pack on my back and soon found myself at the bottom of the Gangway, a gully that leads almost to the summit, and normally containing bare ice, I found the ice covered by 30 centimetres of snow, which slowed my progress on the Gangway. I left my empty water bottle at 8,000 metres and continued, barely managing 10 or 15 steps between rests. When I reached 8,200 metres the summit started to disappear in cloud, but I slowly made my way up to the 8,400 metre level. It was 2.30 pm and I had to leave the Gangway to traverse right across mixed ground to the summit. I was so near to the summit but my will-power and strength were almost gone. I

made a few more steps, rested, then a few more, before stopping to think what I should do. Clouds raced past and the wind was blowing snow in all directions. I pulled my hood in tight to cover my mouth and headed down. I had expected that it would be easier going down but I still had to stop for regular rests.

About an hour down the Gangway I stopped to look back up. The summit was clear and calm. •

## Kangchenjunga





*Lake Pinaroo, Sturt National Park. All photos were taken in western New South Wales.*

**Marianne Porteners**



*Rainbow over gibber desert,  
Sturt National Park. Right,  
saltbush plains.*





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# Caving in Australia

Where the major caves are, and what they are like, by Stephen Bunton

• AUSTRALIA HAS ALMOST 7,000 KNOWN CAVES. These range from rock overhangs to systems many kilometres long, from metre-deep pits to potholes several hundred metres deep. Hidden from view beneath the landscape, located only where the geology permits, they are the least known and often most inaccessible landforms to appreciate. They attract the speleologist who studies science in their darkness, and the sporting caver who seeks challenge in their depths. For those curious outdoor adventurers contemplating their first caving trip it is the peculiar nature of caves and caving, and a lack of knowledge of caving areas and skills, that provide barriers to their participation in this recreational pursuit. For this reason, caving has earned a reputation as an exclusive activity. This survey provides some information for novices contemplating a caving trip or where to go caving.

Although this survey aims to make caving an activity more accessible to the general public, it does not overcome other organizational hurdles such as permission, personal caving gear and vertical caving tackle required by the group. This survey does, however, state the areas where there are such requirements. For the novice caver, the easiest way to plan a caving trip is to contact a recognized caving club or speleological society. These are listed in 'Getting Started' in *Wild* no 17. The expertise of these clubs, and the resources they possess in caving tackle, books, maps and library information, make them invaluable when considering a caving trip to any Australian caving area. The safety aspect of caving cannot be over-stressed, nor can conservation aspects be overlooked in the delicate cave environment. Caving with a club affiliated with the Australian Speleological Federation is your best guarantee that your trip will be a success, that you will return without mishap, and that the caves and caving area will not have suffered from your visit.

**Caving areas.** There are almost 300 caving areas documented in the *Australian Karst Index 1985*. Most of these are karst areas, where caves are formed as a result of the local rock-type being soluble in groundwater. Some karst areas contain no known caves, but soluble rocks such as limestone or dolomite occur in these areas. Other areas are described as pseudo-karst, where caves occur but which have been formed by processes other than solution. Wind and wave action or volcanic activity can form caves in insoluble rocks. Cavers are generally more interested in the exploration of limestone caves since they are more extensive than other types. Limestone can be formed by coral reef deposits (marine) or consolidation of calcareous sand dune

(dune). Clearly it is beyond the scope of this survey to describe the features of all these caving areas. Included here are only the areas where cavers more frequently go caving, where the longest, deepest, best, most interesting and most accessible caves are located.

Caving areas are named according to the nearest population centre or town, or occasionally after the name of the property on which they are located.

The **location** of each area is given in relation to the nearest town. For location details of the individual caves it will be necessary to consult local caving clubs. More notable caves are often included on the various topographic maps which are available from the Lands Department in each State. Depending upon their remoteness and the priority of surveying their neighbourhood, karst areas may appear on a range of maps of different scales. Where possible, the largest scale map is given, though there is no guarantee that specific cave entrances are marked.

**Controlling authority** refers to the owner of the land, and this may be either a government authority or a private property owner. Generally the landowner is the person who issues permits or gives verbal permission to visit the caves. Often they can be a source of additional information, and, in any case, should always be consulted before you visit a caving area. Some areas do not have restriction or regulation of access and will not require such formalities, but for a first-time visit to any area it is imperative that you check the procedures carefully.

Most of Australia's more prominent caving areas, certainly those close to larger population centres or main roads, have at least one or two caves which have been developed as **tourist caves**. Many of these are promoted through the State tourist authorities and are already familiar to members of the general public.

**Permit** indicates whether or not official written permission needs to be sought from the landowner. Bookings generally need to be made a week in advance, and it is not uncommon to find that a caving area is booked out to another club or society. Occasionally caving clubs administer permit systems on behalf of the landowner, such as Ciefflen where the Orange Speleological Society is the club to contact. In some cases written permits are only given to those clubs affiliated to the Australian Speleological Federation, whilst others, such as Colong or Tuglow, are designed to keep an account of cave usage, and, as such, Scout groups and bushwalking clubs are entitled to apply.

The **nature of caves** is a function of various geological and geographic factors. The most

significant factors are the rock-type and the nature of overlying rocks. Where limestone lies beneath impervious rocks, any rivers, streams and gullies formed serve to channel water on



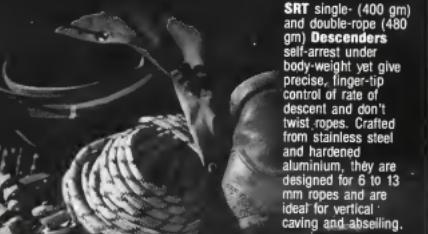
*The 'horrible, muddy squeeze' of Herpes III, Growing Swallet, Tasmania. Stephen Bunton*

to the limestone, and caves develop at the contact where these streams flow underground. Geographical factors such as rainfall determine the nature of such streams, be they perennial or intermittent, and this in turn affects the rate of solution. The geographical relief determines the depth potential of a cave system, as does the thickness of limestone. Local topography and relief also determine the rate of underground water flow. Caves are either *phreatic*, where they dissolve limestone beneath the level of the water surface, or *vadose*, where they form like canyons by water flowing under the influence of gravity through partly water-filled cave passages. The relative humidity of a caving area determines the rate of deposition of calcite, and thus the quantity and often the quality of cave decorations. The upper levels of caves are generally the best endowed with cave formation, often because these galleries are abandoned by active streams and, no longer subject to flooding, have a lower relative humidity. More importantly, they are closer to the surface, and water

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infiltrating through cracks carries the dissolved minerals that redeposit forming cave 'pretties'.

**Clothing** is a problem with any caving trip. Anything you wear underground will be unfit for anything else again. Health-conscious cavers

### Australia's Deepest Caves

(Includes caves deeper than 175 metres)

Rank	Depth (metres)	Name	State	Area
1	373	Anne-A-Kananda	Tas	Junee-Florentine
2	354	Ice Tube-Growing Swallow	Tas	Junee-Florentine
3	323	Khadzum	Tas	Junee-Florentine
4	282	Serendipity	Tas	Junee-Florentine
5	263	Caudron Pot	Tas	Junee-Florentine
6	244	Owl Pot	Tas	Junee-Florentine
7	238	Tassy Pot	Tas	Junee-Florentine
8	235	Arricos	Tas	Junee-Florentine
9	220	Min Martin-Exit Cave System	Tas	Mt. Wild
10	208	Milk Run	Tas	Ida Bay
11	207	Sesame Caves	Tas	Junee-Florentine
12	204	Flick Mints Hole	Tas	Junee-Florentine
13	203	Midnight Hole-Mystery Creek Cave	Tas	Junee-Florentine
14	202	Porcupine Pot	Tas	Junee-Florentine
15	197	The Chairman	Tas	Junee-Florentine
16	192	Cyclops Pot	Tas	Ida Bay
17	189	Big Tree Pot	Tas	Ida Bay
18	186	Pearl Brittle Pot	Tas	Junee-Florentine
19	181	Ustrelas	Tas	Junee-Florentine
20	175	Last Pot	Tas	Junee-Florentine

often promote the weight-loss potential of their sport. This usually happens by abrasion! Caving gear not only serves to protect the caver from

### Australia's Longest Caves

(Includes caves longer than 3 kilometres)

Rank	Length (metres)	Name	State	Area
1	16,000	Exit Cave System	Tas	Ida Bay
2	13,200	Corr-Lynn Cave	SA	Yorke Peninsula
3	13,000	Mulwarrung	WA	Nullarbor Plain
4	11,000	Growing Swallow	Tas	Junee-Florentine
5	10,000	The Queenslander	Qld	Chilgate
6	7,651	Easter Cave	WA	Augusta
7	6,550	Five Cavers Cave	SA	Mt. Gambier
8	6,500	Cocobaddy Cave	WA	Nularbor Plain
9	6,000	Colop Caves	NSW	Colong
10	5,730	Heretics Pot	Tas	Meek Creek
11	5,550	Johannesburg Cave	Qld	Limestone Ridge
12	5,400	Kalkidooon Cave	Qld	Cameroonal
13	5,000	Mimbi Cave (Upper)	WA	Kimberleys
14	3,857	Kubla Khan Cave	Tas	Mole Creek
15	3,800	West Egles Nest System	NSW	Yarrangobilly
16	3,510	Mammooth Cave	NSW	Jordan
17	3,500	Serendipity	Tas	Junee-Florentine
18	3,060	Regi Arch Cave	Qld	Chicago
19	3,000	Dunes Cave	VIC	Budjban
20	3,000	Victoria Fossil Cave	SA	Naracoorte
21	3,000	Anne-A-Kananda	Tas	Mt. Anne

abrasion, but in some cases is needed for insulation from the cold; it often needs to be waterproof. T-shirt, shorts and boots are satisfactory for warmer climates; a boiler suit is the usual mode of dress for Australian mainland caves; a woollen jumper may be added in alpine or some south-eastern caving areas; 'dry grots' is the inglorious name given to waterproof overalls, thermal underwear, pile gear and wellies generally worn in Tasmania; rarely is a wet suit needed.

**Vertical tackle** may be needed to negotiate various obstacles in caves. Depending on the nature of the caves, some caving areas lend

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themselves to vertical caving, whilst others contain mainly horizontal systems. Single rope technique (SRT) is employed in deep caves, and those not conversant with it would be wasting their time to contemplate a trip to such an area. There are exceptions, however, and some caves can be explored without it. Many caving areas require some vertical tackle to gain access to many of the caves or parts of them; for such areas ladders are a suitable alternative. (SRT, of course, can be used instead of ladders.) Some areas contain caves which

can be explored without tackle, but there is the occasional cave which may need gear. In some areas ropes and ladders are totally unnecessary.

The **main features** of any caving area are those for which the area is famous or unique. It may be a particular cave of unusual nature, or a particular feature of a cave, or even a cave of record length or depth.

**Further information** can be obtained from the controlling authority, the caving club that has been most active in the area, various

publications which have appeared over the years, or the newsletters of local caving clubs.

Beyond this survey there is only one other good resource worth tapping, and that is the heads of any friendly cavers. Ply them with some libation, and they are sure to tell you the place they like best to go grovelling in the bowels of the earth. Take their word for it, you'll enjoy it! Happy caving. •

Stephen Bunton (see Contributors in Wild no 6) is Wild's Contributing Editor for caving. He has been grovelling for 14 years, including during several overseas expeditions.

## Wild Activities Survey

## Where to go Caving

Location	Maps	Controlling authority	Permits	Nature of caves	Clothing	Vertical tackle	Main features	Further information
<b>Northern Territory</b>								
Katherine	Manbulloo (5986) 1:100,000	Private. Conservation Commission of NT, Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority, RAAF. Permit required		Marine limestone. Intermittent inflow caves with some vertical sections. Dry, very hot and sporting. Subject to rockfall	Boiler suit	Ladders	Biologically active caves with a profusion of snakes	Top End Speleological Society, c/- PO Box Jabiru, NT 5796
Barkly-Camerow	Between Daly Waters (NT) and Beulah (Qld), approximately 1:100,000	Private		Extinct marine limestone plateaus with caves and dry inflow caves active in the wet season. Goumboi at Camerow	Boiler suit	Ladders	Kakadu Cave still not completely explored	University of Queensland Speleological Society, The Union, University of Qld, St Lucia, Qld 4067
Chilagae	Around and NW of Chilagae, Chilagae (7863), Mungana (7763) 1:100,000	Self-guided tourist caves. National Parks and Wildlife Service. Permit required		Extensive marine limestone tower karst region with numerous caves in each month. Very hot	Shorts	Occasional	World renowned surface features. 'Bunjil' caves. The Chilagae is a very sporting and biologically interesting area with some unusual decoration. Almost 350 caves and 250 towers	Chilagae Caving Club, PO Box 92, Cairns, Qld 4870. Chilagae Caves, Sydney Speleological Society Occasional Paper No 3
Limestone Ridge	1 km N of Mt Eliza Ridgegways (8951) 1:100,000	Self-guided tourist caves. National Parks and Wildlife Service		Marine limestone	Boiler suit	Ladders	Johannesen Cave, an extensive wild tourist cave	University of Queensland Speleological Society
Mt Eliza	20 km N of Rockhampton. Ridgegways (8951) 1:100,000	Mining company. Permit required		Small caves in a conical marine limestone hill	As above	As above	Bat Cleft, a bat maternity cave threatened by quarrying. Numerous bat species	As above. Mt Eliza and the Caves by Evelyn Hamilton Smith and Randal Chapman for the Queensland Conservation Council, 1975
Mitchell-Palmer	Around and S of Palmerin, Maytown (7765) 1:100,000	Private. Permit required		Marine limestone tower karst. Numerous hot, dry caves	Shorts	Unnecessary	150 metre karst towers	Chilagae Caving Club
<b>New South Wales</b>								
Abercrombie	70 km S of Bathurst. Abercrombie (8720) 1:25,000	Tourist caves. Department of Leisure, Sport and Tourism		Marine limestone. Most caves are side passages of a natural arch with an active river flowing through it	Boiler suit	Occasional	The Grand Arch. The area was used as a hideout by bushrangers	Metropolitan Speleological Society, PO Box 2376, North Parramatta, NSW 2151
Bungonia	30 km E of Goulburn. Caves (8628 IV N) 1:25,000	State Recreation Reserve (Lands Department)		Deep vertical marine limestone caves. Dry, with terminal sumps and tail air	As above	Ladders or SRT	Five of the six deepest caves on the mainland. Over 150 caves. Bungonia Gorge	Bungonia Caves, Sydney Speleological Society Occasional Paper No 4, edited by R. B. Smith, PO Box 198, Broadway, NSW 2007
Cleeton	30 km W of Cobar. Cawndilla (8630 1&V) 1:50,000	Private (GSS). Permit required		Marine limestone. Well decorated caves with very muddy floors	As above	Occasional	Tuglow Maze, Main Cleeton, Murky Cave	Orange Speleological Society, PO Box 752, Orange, NSW 2800
Colong	30 km S of Jenolan Caves. Bindook (8629 IV S) 1:25,000	National Parks and Wildlife Service. Permit required		Long and complex dry marine limestone cave	As above	Unnecessary	Colong Cave	Outdoor Activities for Senior Scouts by Rick Jameson (includes map)
Coolamine Plain	As above			Deep gorge. Small marine limestone caves with streams and sumps	Boiler suit and jumper, or wet suit	As above	Coolamine Gorge. Several sumps which can be dived free and others requiring self-contained underwater breathing apparatus	Canberra Speleological Society, 18 Arbutus Street, Aranda, ACT 2614
Jenolan	30 km SW of Katoomba. Jenolan (8630 II N) 1:25,000	Tourist caves. Tourist Commission. Permit required		Marine limestone. Natural arches with many caves leading off. Active stream. Level caves along 10 km outcrop	Boiler suit	Occasional	Grand Arch, Devil's Coachhouse. Tourist caves of world renown. Mammal Cave	Sydney University Speleological Society, PO Box 35, The Union, Sydney, NSW 2000. Sydney Speleological Research Council, PO Box 183, Broadway, NSW 2007. The Exploration and Speleogeography of Mammal Cave, Jenolan Caves by J. D. Davies. The Caves of Jenolan 2. The Northern limestone by B. R. Welch
Kempsey	Several outcrops W of Kempsey at Stockyard Creek, Caves (9336) 1:100,000. Caves (9336 III N), Burringbar (9336 III N), Warrumbungle (9336 II S) 1:25,000	Private, State Forestry		Small marine limestone caves in isolated outcrops	As above	Unnecessary	Corral Bat Cave. Other caves with interesting biology	Kempsey Speleological Society, 27 River Street, Kempsey, NSW 2440
Tuglow	15 km SW of Jenolan Caves (8629 II S) 1:25,000	National Parks and Wildlife Service. Permit required		Marine limestone. Vertical shafts into stream passage with upper level	Boiler suit and jumper	Ladders	Tuglow Cave	University of NSW Speleological Society, Box 17, The Union, University of NSW, Kensington, NSW 2033
Wee Jasper	50 km SW of Yass. Caves (8627 IV S) 1:25,000	Tourist cave. Private		Extensive horizontal dry marine limestone caves with vertical entrances	Boiler suit	As above	Dip, Dogleg, and Punchbowl caves. Caves tourist cave	Canberra Speleological Society
Wellington	8 km S of Wellington. Wellington (8632 1&V) 1:50,000	Tourist cave. Wellington Shire Council		Dry marine limestone caves with initial of bone breccia. Fair air	As above	Unnecessary	Cathedral tourist cave, fossils	Hightail Caving Group, PO Box 154, Liverpool, NSW 2170
Wooroonoo	25 km NE of Taree. Archways (8629 II N) 1:25,000	Tourist caves. Department of Leisure, Sport and Tourism. Permit required		Marine caves with active stream and well decorated upper galleries	Boiler suit or dry gear	Occasional	Tourist caves. Sporting, wet caves	Wooroonoo Caves, Sydney Speleological Society Occasional Paper No 8, edited by H. S. Dyer

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THIS ISN'T WELL WITH THE OSTRICH FEATHERS LIKE SLEEPING BAG WITH A TEMPERATURE RATING OF 17° CELSIUS AND THE 31° FABRIC FEATHERS. IT'S NOT WARM. SKI JACKET MADE TO MEASURE BY KARLIS DESERT. ONE OF THE FEATHERS QUITS THE SAME AS OUR SURROUND GREASE...

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HANDSPUN BEANIE TOO GOOD FOR HIM, ER! IT'S A SHOWER CAP FILLED WITH "SNOW" THAT'S MEANT TO BE A FAISELLE. PATIENT HAS HEAT RETENTION PROPERTIES OF DRIED FILCHARD.

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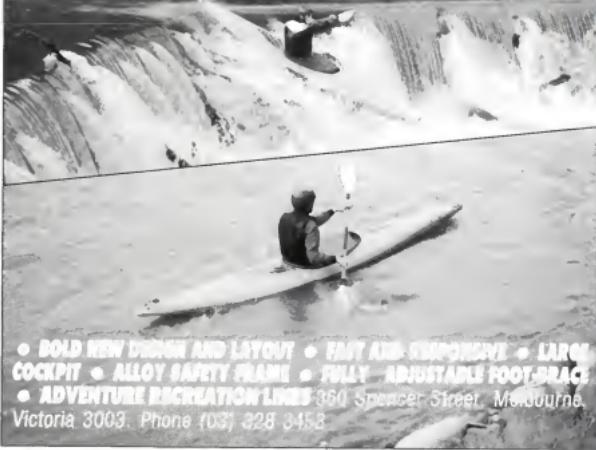
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## Wild Activities Survey

## Where to go Caving

Location, Maps	Controlling authority, Permits	Nature of caves	Clothing	Vertical tasks	Main features	Further information
Wynberne 50 km S of Brindabella Kosciusko (8826 111 N) 1:25,000	Lands Department. Permit required	Marine limestone. Large outflow stream	Boiler suit and jumper or dry suits	Ladders	Wyandene Cave, decorated	Canberra Speleological Society
Yarrangobilly 25 km N of Kandanga Yarrangobilly (8526 111 S) 1:25,000	Self-guided tourist cave. National Parks and Wildlife Service. Permit required	Steep gradient inflow marine limestone caves with corresponding outflow caves. High nest, active streams, good formations	Dry suits or boiler suit and jumper	As above	Eagles Nest system, deepest Australian mainland cave. Glory Hole self-guided tourist cave	As above, University of NSW Speleological Society
<b>Victoria</b>						
Buchan 65 km NE of Bairnsdale. Murrindindi (8923) 1:100,000	Tourist caves. Department Conservation, Forests & Lands. Permit required	Small well-decorated marine limestone caves along the Buchan River	Boiler suit and jumper	Ladders	Tourist caves and some abandoned tourist caves	Victoria Speleological Association, GPO Box 5425 CC, Melbourne, Vic 3001
Bell Ridges 5 km W of Portland Portland (7221) 1:100,000	State Fauna Reserve. Permit required	Small, tight, craggy marine limestone caves	Boiler suit	As above	Bats	As above
Hamilton Large lava plain extends from Hamilton to Melbourne. Hamilton (7322) 1:100,000	Private	Volcanic. Collapsed entrances lead to lava tubes. One of the world's largest cavernous lava tubes	As above	Occasional	1,100 metres long Mt Hamilton Cave. Australia's longest lava tube cave	As above
Murrindindi 10 km N of Buchan Murrindindi (8923) 1:100,000	Self-guided tourist caves. Department Conservation, Forests & Lands. Permit required	Small, well-decorated, fossiliferous, marine limestone caves	Boiler suit and jumper	As above	Murrindindi and Shades of Death self-guided tourist caves	As above
<b>Tasmania</b>						
Hastings 10 km SW of Devonport (8211) 1:100,000	Tourist caves. National Parks and Wildlife Service. Permit required	Small, well-decorated dolomite caves	Boiler suit	Ladders	Newdegate tourist cave	National Parks and Wildlife Service
Ida Bay 5 km S of Hastings. Huon (8211) 1:100,000	National Parks and Wildlife Service. Permit required	Deep-shaft marine limestone caves, occasionally connecting to stream passages in Eat System cave	Dry suits	SRT	Eat Cave. Australia's longest cave. Several different through-routes and 100 metre pitches	Tasmanian Caving Club, PO Box 416, Sandy Bay, Tas 7005. Vertical Caves of Tasmania by Stephen Buntar and Roger Eberhart, 1984
Junce-Florentine N of Mole Creek. Tyenna (8212) 1:100,000	Australian Newsprint Mills. Permit required	Many deep marine limestone caves. Active inflows, some connecting to Growing Swellst system stream passages	As above	As above	Growing Swellst. Australia's most awesome river-cave system. Many caves which have formerly claimed the title of deepest cave in Australia	Tasmanian Caving Club
Mole Creek S of Mole Creek and along the Mersey River. Mersey (8114) 1:100,000	Tourist caves. Private. National Parks and Wildlife Service. Permit required	Beautifully decorated marine limestone caves with active streams	Dry suits or wet suit	Ladders	Marasoppa and King Solomon's tomb. Tasmania's most beautiful wild caves and longest stalactite	Northern Cavers, PO Box 315, Launceston, Tas 7250
Mt Anne Mt Anne Bridge, Hedge (8112) 1:100,000	National Parks and Wildlife Service	Deep dolomite shafts	Dry suits	SRT	Anne-a-Karanda. Australia's deepest cave. Many 100 metre shafts	Tasmanian Caving Club
Mt Weld N Ridge, Huon (8211) 1:100,000	As above	Deep dolomite cave	As above	As above	Arriklos Cave	Southern Caving Society, PO Box 121, Moonah, Tas 7009
<b>South Australia</b>						
Eyre Peninsula Entire peninsula. Shrimps (5930) 1:100,000	Private	Small, dense limestone caves with vertical or domine entrances (sink holes)	Shorts	Ladders	Still water, sumps and underground lakes	South Australian Caving Reference Book, Cave Exploration Group of SA Occasional Paper No. 5, by Len Lewis, 1976
Finders Ranges 70 km N of Port Pirie. Onkaparinga (5141) 1:25,000	Lands Department	Small dry, marine limestone caves	As above	Occasional	Terminal sumps and lakes	Cave Exploration Group of SA
Kangaroo Island Entire Island. Borda (6226) 1:100,000	Tourist caves. Private. National Parks. Permit required	Well-decorated dense limestone	Boiler suit	As above	Kelly Hill tourist caves	As above
Mt Gambier Around Mt Gambier. Gumeracha (7022), Northam (7021) 1:100,000	Private. Permit required	Dense limestone caves. Some completely water-filled	Boiler suit or wet suit and self-contained breathing apparatus	Ladders	Ewens Ponds. Picrammine Ponds. Australia's best cave diving	Cave Diving Association of Australia, PO Box 120, North Adelaide, SA 5006. GPO Box 2181 T, Melbourne, Vic 3001
Naracoorte 10 km S of Naracoorte. Penola (7023) 1:100,000	Tourist caves. National Parks and Wildlife Service. Permit required	Dune limestone cavities filled with sediment and bone deposits. Good decoration	Boiler suit	Unnecessary	Most significant paleontological cave sites in Australia. Victoria Fossil tourist cave	Cave Exploration Group of SA Discover Naracoorte Caves by Ian Lewis, 1977
Yorke Peninsula Entire peninsula. Standbury 1:100,000	Private	Dekorate plains with doline entrances	Boiler suit	Ladders	Carra-Lynn Cave, longest on the Australian mainland	Cave Exploration Group of SA
<b>Western Australia</b>						
Augusta 5 km W of Augusta. Lowerown (1829) 1:100,000	Tourist caves. Augusta-Margaret River Tourist Bureau. Permit required	Dune limestone (calcareous) caves with exceptionally beautiful formations	Boiler suit	Occasional	Augusta Jewel tourist cave. Easter and Monidine caves. World's longest straw	Western Australia Speleological Group, PO Box 120, Nedlands, WA 6009
Kimberleys Area covered by: Robeira (4180), Etna (4161), Fitzroy Crossing (4061), Lennard (3945), Leopold (3946), Donnybrook (3947) 1:100,000	Self-guided tourist cave. National Parks and Wildlife Service. Department Conservation and Land Management. Permit required	Scattered cavernous marine limestone outcrops. Some dissected by gorges. An expedition area	Shorts	As above	The Tunnel self-guided tourist cave. Gidge Gorge. Various canyons and gorges with caves, often containing streams and lakes	As above
Margaret River 5 km W of Margaret River. Augusta (3940) 1:100,000	Self-guided tourist caves. Department Conservation and Land Management. Permit required	Dune limestone (calcareous) caves	Boiler suit	As above	Abandoned tourist caves	As above
Nularbor Western SA and parts of WA. Nullarbor (4133), Cockleberry (4034), Coombabah (4152), Eucla (4054), Murchison Pass (4334) 1:100,000	Private	Marine limestone plain with collapse doline entrances, large passage chambers, underground lakes and good decoration	Shorts or wet suit and self-contained breathing apparatus	Occasional	Cockleberry Cave, the world's longest cave-dive, with 6 kilometers of passageway. Nullarbor Cave, third longest (and one of the largest) in Australia	Cave Diving Association of Australia Nullarbor Caves, Cave Exploration Group of SA Occasional Paper, by J R Bulley
Witchcliffe 15 km SW of Margaret River. Leven (1925) 1:100,000	Tourist caves. As above	As above, containing exceptionally beautiful formations	As above	Ladders	Lake and Mammoth tourist caves. Over 100 caves	As above
Yallingup 30 km W of Busselton. Busselton (1920) 1:100,000	Tourist cave. Private. Department Conservation and Land Management. Permit required	Dune limestone caves with collapse entrances	As above	Occasional	Yallingup tourist cave	As above
Yançep 50 km N of Perth. Perth (2034) 1:100,000	Tourist cave. National Parks and Wildlife Service. Permit required	Small, dense limestone (calcareous) caves with underground streams	As above	Unnecessary	Crystal tourist cave	As above

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The Pioneer canoe is lightweight, stable and safe. It's virtually indestructible – the tough one-piece moulded polyethylene construction enabling it to bounce over rocks, pebbles and other obstacles without being damaged. The canoe's polyethylene moulding ensures it will float at all times and provides maximum stability. Suitable for rivers, lakes or the sea, the Pioneer canoe is easy to handle and great for family fun – no matter how fast the rapids run.



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# Plastic Canoes and Kayaks

A Wild mini-survey of the latest 'plastic fantasitics'

● **Plastic Canoes and Kayaks.** Technology is at it again. Fibreglass replaced canvas; now polyethylene is bringing about the demise of fibreglass. Even though fibreglass craft are generally lighter, a little cheaper, and available in more styles, many paddlers are choosing plastic craft.

Polyethylene has an impact strength many times that of fibreglass. Indeed polyethylene boats are difficult to damage. I once had one which suffered only a few scratches when it fell from my car while travelling at 100 kilometres an hour. Hire outlets find that these boats last six to ten times longer than fibreglass ones.

Durability is not the only attraction. Plastic canoes and kayaks usually have specially designed, high-quality fittings: long-life non-crumbing buoyancy foam, comfortable and often adjustable seats, generous hand loops, and proper, fully adjustable foot-rests are common. Reinforcing struts and supports are designed to prevent a kayak folding around the paddler's legs under extreme water pressure and trapping the paddler underwater. As plastic kayaks are less likely to break up under such stress, strategic reinforcement is an important safety consideration.

Construction techniques determine impact strength, resilience, and ease of repair. Polyethylene molecules link in linear- or cross-linked patterns. Cross-linked polyethylene is stronger, and holds its shape a little better, but cannot be easily repaired. A weld will fail under stress because new molecules cannot enter the cross-linked chain once it is formed. An effective repair requires a more time-consuming patch. Linear-linked polyethylene will hole or split more easily (although it stood up well to my inadvertent 'car test'), but can easily be repaired. Heating the plastic with a small stove results in a near-perfect repair because the linear-linked molecules can re-link when the plastic is hot. This is a definite advantage for the canoeist attempting riverside repairs in remote places. Both moulding methods represent a compromise, and neither can be identified visually.

A polyethylene kayak starts life as handfuls of plastic beads poured into a metal mould. The mould is rotated and heated until the plastic forms a layer of varying thickness, as required, inside the mould. After cooling, the mould is opened to reveal a one-piece, seamless craft to which fittings are attached. A sufficient range of craft is now available in Australia to suit most types of canoeing. Lightweight racing and competition craft are still made exclusively from fibreglass.

All the models surveyed are made from high quality materials to good designs and are perfect for their intended purposes. Suitability, and marginal suitability, for specific applications is indicated in the table by solid and hollow dots respectively. Most are well finished, although fittings on the Australian-made Cascade are not

as neatly finished and do not include an adjustable foot-rest. (It is, however, available as an option.)

The prices of similarly performing imported craft vary greatly because of our trading inequality with different countries (due to relative currency values) rather than to differences in quality.

Whether you tour the sea, paddle flat water or play in white water, there is an appropriate, specifically designed plastic craft available for you. Because of its durability, you will only buy it once.

Stephen Brew

● **Archimedes' Hideaway.** Eureka! introduces two new, self-supporting, lightweight tents. Crescent 1 and 2 (person) tents have shock-

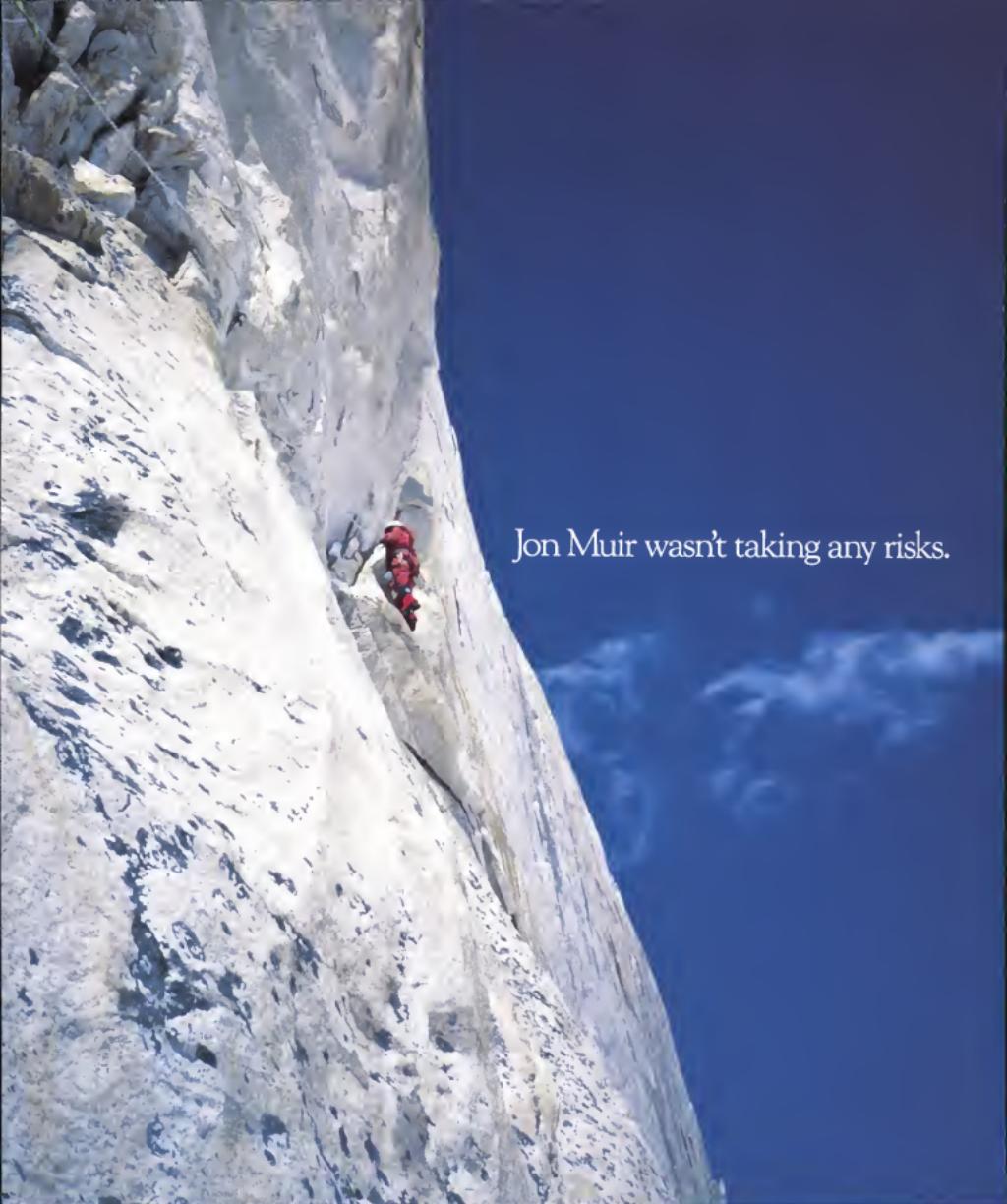
corded aluminium hoops and a convenient zippered entrance along the full length of the tent. The inner tent has a ventilating net ceiling panel. The floor and fly are made of proofed 1.9 ounce nylon with tape-sealed seams. Crescent 1 weighs 1.8 kilograms, RRP \$249. Crescent 2 weighs 2.4 kilograms, RRP \$325.

The revised Eureka! Alpine Meadows tents have heavier floors, longer flys and all-aluminium frames. The new two-person Alpine Meadows is expected to sell for an introductory price of \$399.

● **Sad Sack?** If you followed the crowd and bought a Coca-Cola championship yo-yo, hula hoop, Frisbee, skateboard and Cabbage Patch Doll but would like to be at the forefront of the next phenomenon, here is your chance.

## Wild Gear Survey Plastic Canoes and Kayaks

Use	Coastal touring	Estuaries, bays, harbours	Reservoirs, small lakes	Fat-creek touring	White-water touring	White-water play	Polyethylene construction	Weight kilograms	Length/beam centimetres	Aprox price
<b>Canoes</b>										
<b>B-Line</b> Australia										
Wobbygong	○	●	●	○			Linear	36	450/84	\$788
<b>Coleman</b> USA										
Canoe	○	●	●	○			Cross	33.6	460/92	\$1,100
Scano	○	●	●	○			Cross	41.8	480/102	\$1,200
<b>Nylex</b> Australia										
Pioneer	○	●	●				Linear	30	365/91	\$425
<b>Kayaks</b>										
<b>Adventure Recreation Lines</b> Australia										
Cascade	○	○	●	●			Linear	20	400/60	\$495
<b>Ace</b> UK										
Dancer (Perception)				●	●		Linear	15	350/60	\$728
Europa	○	●	●	●	●		Linear	17	390/60	\$720
Mirage	○	○	●	●	●		Linear	16.8	400/60	\$758
<b>Current Craft</b> New Zealand										
Dancer (Perception)				●	●	●	Linear	15	350/60	\$590
Dura	○	●	●	●	●		Linear	18	400/60	\$535
Minnow	○	●	●	●			Linear	15	270/76	\$345
<b>Pyrahana</b> UK										
Freestyle			○	●	●		Linear or cross	15-19	370/62	\$775
Robroy	●	●					Linear	18	345/66	\$590
Robot	○	●					Linear or cross	13	290/57	\$485
<b>Quality Kayaks</b> New Zealand										
Combat	○	●					Linear	12	204/60	\$339
Olympia	●	●	●	●	●	○	Cross	15.5	394/60	\$545
Puffin	●	●	●	●	○		Cross	25	510/60	\$1,225
Venturer	○	●	●	●	●		Cross	18	416/60	\$555



Jon Muir wasn't taking any risks.

Jon Muir led the first party to climb the West Summit of Mt Shivling by the South-west Pillar. An almost vertical climb of 2,000 metres.

But Jon wasn't taking any chances.

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He carried a Fairydown Terra Nova cordura pack.

He was protected inside a Fairydown Trilogy tent. He was snug and warm in a Fairydown Everest Entrant sleeping bag.

So before you head off into the wild, drop in to your Fairydown stockist. Like Jon Muir, you wouldn't want to be taking any unnecessary risks.

**Fairydown**  
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Jon Muir's equipment is available from these Fairydown stockists. Windsuit available for expeditions.

**Victoria: Bush & Mountain Sports, Melbourne.** Paddy Pallin, Melbourne. Scout Outdoor Centres, Melbourne, Mitcham, Moorabbin. Ajays, Heathmont. Eastern Mountain Centre, Camberwell. Wilderness Shop, Box Hill. Marechal Camping, Dandenong. Outsports, Caulfield, Frankston. Hike and Ski, Frankston. Chandler Hobby & Toy Centre, Shepparton. Central Victorian Outdoor Services, Bendigo.

**Queensland: Jim the Backpacker, Brisbane.** The Camping Centre, Brisbane. Scout Outdoor Centres, Brisbane.

**New South Wales:** Southern Cross Camping Equipment, Sydney. Eastwood Camping Centre, Sydney. Mountain Equipment, Sydney. Norski, Sydney. Alp Sport, Sydney. Scout Outdoor Centres, Sydney, Wagga. Caving Equipment, Sydney. Wollongong Saddlery & Bushcraft, Wollongong.

**A.C.T.: CSE Camping & Sports, Canberra.** Houdine Camping, Canberra. Jurkiewicz Camping Centre, Canberra. Paddy Pallin, Canberra. Scout Outdoor Centres, Canberra. Wild Country, Canberra.

**South Australia:** Flinders Ranges, Adelaide. Scout Outdoor Centres, Adelaide. Thor-Paddy Pallin, Adelaide.

**Western Australia: Big Country, Perth.** Scout Outdoor Centres, Perth.

**Tasmania: Scout Outdoor Centres, Hobart.** Allgoods, Launceston. Paddy Pallin, Launceston. Youngs Outdoor Gear, Burnie.

**Hacky Sack** footbags are five centimetre diameter spherical leather bean bags. One or more Hackymasters(!) juggle the Hacky Sack, keeping it in constant flight only with their feet or knees.

Derived from ancient kicking games, the Hacky Sack footbag was developed by an



Demonstrating the Hacky Sack. The world record is 38,000 consecutive kicks!

American gridiron player while rehabilitating an injured knee. The current world record for consecutive kicks is 38,000.

Hacky Sacks will appeal to the sort of person who enjoys tossing car keys into the air and trying to catch them behind his back. As well as providing a diversion, a Hacky Sack might do wonders for your balance and co-ordination.

Official Hacky Sack footbags are available from Paddy Pallin and sports shops for \$8.95.

**Eccentric Eccentrics.** Novel *rockclimbing hardware* continues to surface in *Paddy Pallin* shops. The *Bergsport International Jokers* are spring-loaded tri-camming devices. The Joker's flexible cable stem and compact dimensions make it more suitable than Wild Country Friends for use in pockets and horizontal placements. The shorter axle on which Joker cams rotate may also mean that it is stronger. (Under extreme loads, camming devices of this type fail when the axles bend, compromising the cam alignment.) The Joker cam profile follows a more abrupt and ambitious spiral than Friends, a possibly less secure shape.

A range of five sizes is designed to fit 21 to 65 millimetre cracks. The smallest weighs about 100 grams, the largest 190 grams (comparable with Friends). All sizes share a common 45 millimetre axle and 220 millimetre stem. Unfortunately at RRP's of \$68.75 to \$74.50 few climbers are likely to see the funny side!

If you are about to buy a screw-gate karabiner and figure-of-eight descender inspect a *Bergsport International Clou*. The Clou is an elongated (180 millimetres long) screw-gate karabiner pinched at one end. Its shape is like the outline of a peanut, or keyhole. At a recom-

mended retail price of \$44.80 and less than 200 grams, the Clou costs and weighs less than many combinations of screw-gate karabiners and figures-of-eight it replaces. The Clou can be used to belay and abseil in the same way as a figure-of-eight, yet clips directly to a harness. The broad, gentle curve of the Clou's blade is well isolated from the gate's screw-lock (preventing the rope from accidentally unlocking the karabiner), and is suitable for use with an Italian hitch. Strength is given as 2,200 kilograms.

*Bi caps* are not new contraceptive devices, but articulated, two-piece wedges. The curved surfaces between the upper and lower part, which is fixed to the steel cable, allow *Bergsport International Bi caps* to hinge. Like Wild Country Rocks, the opposing faces which contact rock



*Bergsport Bi caps.*

are concave and convex, however the curvature of the Bi caps varies as the two halves pivot, conforming to the crack placement. The nine sizes cost between \$8.95 and \$11.80 each.

**Skid Marks.** You have just convinced your mum that rockclimbing is safer than knitting and now she's annoyed at how fast your new Dunlop Volleys are wearing out. The solution? Simply tell her about *Wild Country (Australia) Gecko friction boots*. They are made with sturdy canvas-lined suede uppers and lots of rubber, to a compact design. A pair costs about \$128.

**It's Twins.** The *Berghaus Gemini* or *Stormbelt Inter-Active Gore-Tex shell and Polartec jacket* can be worn individually or zipped together as one garment. The Stormbelt is made with the tightly woven, pliable Gore-Tex Ultra face-fabric and has tape-sealed seams, a two-way storm-proof zip closure, pockets, draw-cord, wired visor, Velcro adjustable cuffs, and costs \$315. The simpler Gemini shell jacket costs \$298. The front zip of the *Berghaus Polartec* jacket joins a corresponding zip inside Gemini and the *Stormbelt Inter-Active shells*. The Polartec jacket is available in a variety of colours and costs \$139.

**Kea Fodder.** The new *Wild Country (Australia) Kea pack* is modelled on the well-

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GET A B-LINE CANOE**

proven Lowe Triplet. It has taped interior seams, neat pleated side-pockets which concertina when side compression-straps are tightened, weighs only 2.3 kilograms and holds about 60 litres; about \$188. The Weka has two compartments and costs about \$198, the nicely detailed OS Travel Pack about \$200.

• **Pedometry.** A Pedometer measures the distance you walk or run by recording the jolting motion of each step. A valuable navigational aid, its accuracy depends on the evenness of your gait and how well you calibrate the pedometer

a spare bulb. Simply rotating the reflector and lens housing turns on the light, further rotation makes the beam narrower by increasing the lens and reflector focal length. RRP \$39 at Paddy Pallin shops.

• **Penis Envy?** Having to bare all whenever nature calls is inconvenient for women, not to mention hazardous in extreme conditions. Sanifem, an anatomically designed 'funnel' available at Paddy Pallin shops offers discreet relief. The coy instructions are a giggle. RRP \$25.

• **Photophobia.** Undoubtedly the protective case which came with your camera will have been found wanting in even the friendliest environments you explore. The English Camera Care Systems range of protective pouches and bags was designed specifically for outdoor use.

The Snowflake (RRP \$50), Spindrift (\$52) and Avalanche (\$53.80) accommodate an average 35 millimetre single-lens-reflex camera with up to 70, 150 or 210 millimetre lenses respectively, and will particularly appeal to walkers, skiers and mountaineers. The Avalanche holds a camera with telephoto lens or with two shorter lenses. A draw-cord secures the camera snugly in protective padding. Even with gloved hands the deep elasticized skirt easily pulls down over the shoulders of the pouch body, sealing against rain and snow. There are no zips. The Camera Care System can be inspected at Paddy Pallin shops.

• **Feet First.** The function of footwear is critical to the comfort and health of walkers, skiers and climbers.

Superfeet Soft Runner Winter Sport and Kork insoles are designed to complement and stabilize the foot's natural shock-absorbing reaction. Superfeet insoles cradle the protective pad of tissue beneath the heel and resist rolling.

They are distributed by Vince Coles and are presently available from ski shops such as Ajays Snow Country Sports, in Victoria, which recommends them when fitting walking boots and ski boots. RRP from \$25.

• **Cautious Cutting.** The Swedish Hanses Design safety knife imported by Scarada has a unique trigger grip handle which protects the user's hand and, together with the textured finish, prevents the knife from slipping from the user's grip. A raised button on the holster engages the knife-handle's trigger-finger hole, preventing accidental release. The knife is released from the scabbard as the forefinger passes through the trigger grip disengaging the locking button.

The stainless steel blade is 110 millimetres long; overall length is 335 millimetres. RRP \$29.75.

New products (on loan to Wild), and/or information about them, including colour slides, are welcomed for possible review in this department. Written items should be typed, include recommendations, retail prices, and preferably, not exceed 200 words. Send items to the Editor, Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria, 3181



K&R pedometer.

to your stride. Pedometers usually clip on to your pocket, waistband or belt and should be worn as close to your centre of gravity as possible.

Three models are imported by Macson Trading Company, and are available from bushwalking shops. Prices, of course, are subject to imminent increases with the falling value of the Australian dollar.

The Silva Sportach model measures up to 99.9 kilometres in 100 metre divisions and has a mechanical digital display. The Sportach has a walking and running mode and can be calibrated for strides of 50 to 180 centimetres. RRP \$57.

The K&R twin-hand, clock-dial model measures up to 100 kilometres in 125 metre divisions. Pace length is adjustable from 50 to 100 centimetres. RRP \$55.

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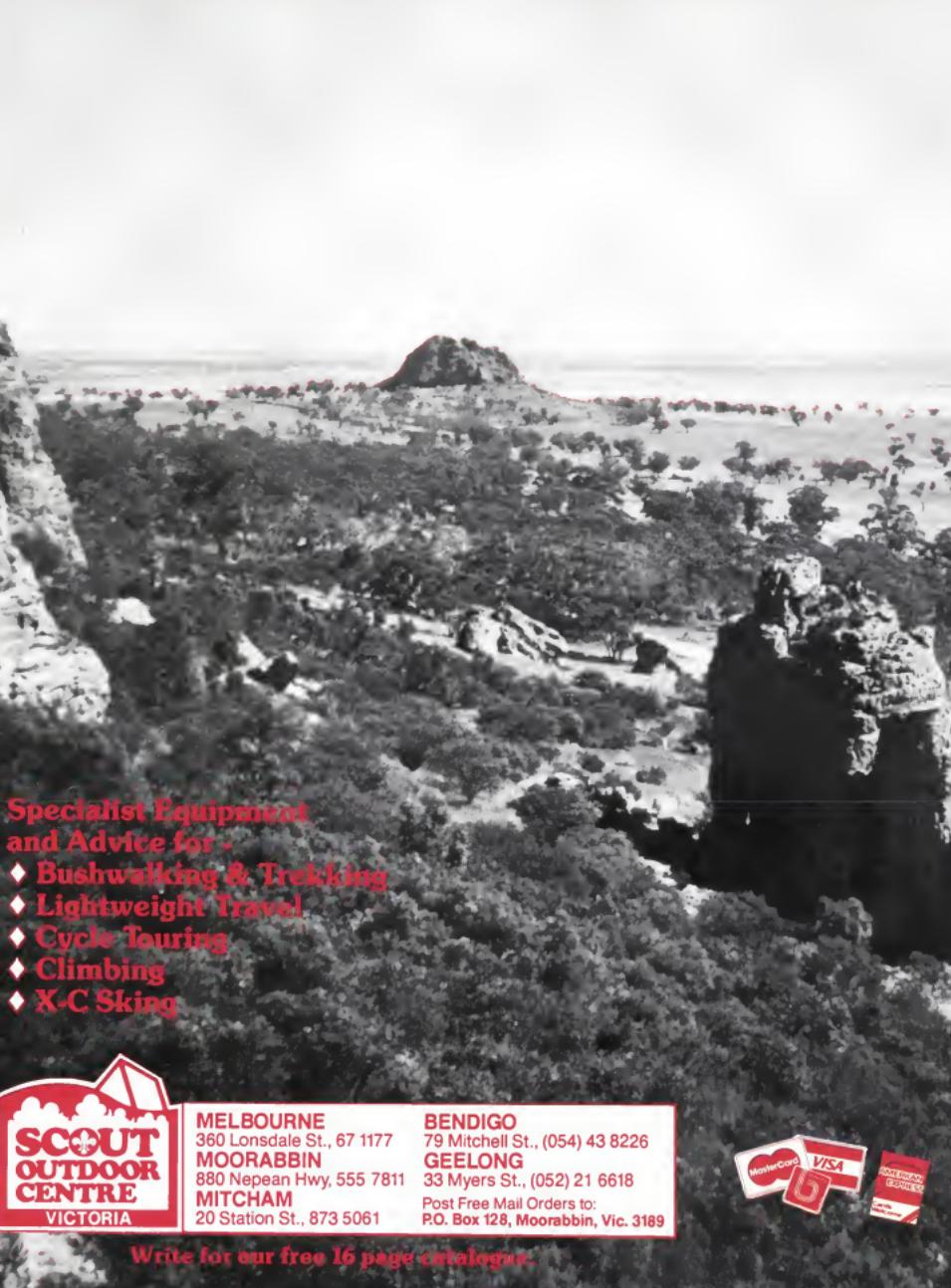


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# Kakadu

...the book

**Kakadu** by Derrick Ovington (Australian Government Publishing Service, 1986, RRP \$28). **Australia's World Heritage Sites** by Vincent Serventy (Macmillan, 1986, RRP \$29.95).

There is a paradox about World Heritage Areas, particularly those whose heritage values rest on their wilderness. To attract the support necessary to survive the politics of development, there needs to be beautiful, glossy books like these. Both idealize the Australian environment, creating images in the public mind that a government despoils at its own cost. But, if too successful, they will defeat their own purpose; already Kakadu and the Franklin can be overcrowded. Perhaps the best thing you can do for wilderness is stay away! Visit it instead through these books. Besides, there are fewer mosquitoes around a coffee table.

Of the two, Ovington's book on Kakadu is the more satisfying, both to read and for its photographs. However, he has had to steer so carefully through the political minefield that most spontaneous enthusiasm has been edited out. What is left, however, does describe the park from an enlightening Aboriginal perspective. Serventy's book is a useful but necessarily brief introduction to Australia's five World Heritage Areas, although he has a tendency to drift into systematic descriptions of animal life which come so easily to his prolific pen.

Stephen Garnett

**Drought or Deluge: Man in the Cooper's Creek Region** by H M Tolcher (Melbourne University Press, 1986, RRP \$27.50).

It was in 1845 that an old man of the Yantruwanta tribe was disturbed by his people's first sight of a white man after at least 40,000 years of habitation in the Cooper's Creek area. One hundred and forty years later it is instructive to reflect on the impact Europeans have made in Australia.

The Cooper has a unique place in Australian folklore. An oasis in the desert heart, site of the stockade where Burke and Wills missed Brahe, it once supported a large population of Aborigines and even giant prehistoric fauna.

After the Burke and Wills expedition, the Victorian colony ceded an area of the Cooper to its indigenous inhabitants 'for their exclusive use' as an act of gratitude for keeping King alive. Whether this generosity on the part of a distant colony touched the Aborigines is not known. Even in white man's law the gift had no recognition, and the complex and subtle culture of the Cooper was soon largely bludgeoned away by a tide of settlers. Pastoral exploitation brought plagues, denudation, periodical wealth and a new outback culture.

Tolcher's researches have clothed the folklore with substance. True, at times the treatment is scant (12 pages on the culture of the Aborigines, seven on Burke and Wills). Elsewhere there is too much detail, including bewildering statistics as to stock, income and size of stations. But the accounts of struggle, of thirsty death on the track, and of a remote lifestyle will have a fascination for many bushwalkers.



Aboriginal rock art, Kakadu National Park, Northern Territory. Photo by Ian Morris, reproduced from Kakadu, courtesy Australian Government Publishing Service.

The text is supported by several black-and-white photographs and maps. The book's overall appearance is needlessly stodgy: readable history like this should have a more inviting appearance.

Brian Walters

**Oxford Dictionary of Natural History** by Michael Allaby (Oxford University Press, 1985, RRP \$50).

Natural history is a delightfully vague term used to explain any interest in the non-human world that is neither too specialized nor too rigorous. It is perhaps fitting that the purpose of a dictionary of this undiscipline should also be vague. Twelve thousand definitions could have listed comprehensively the terms and concepts of the natural sciences but, alas, the editors were tempted to mention individual species. Since there are a good many more than 12,000 species of living organism, the results were bound to reflect individual contributors' experience patchily—a bit like including your friends in a dictionary of famous people. Riddled with goosfish, marmots and yellow chub, the dictionary has ended up with room for only a fraction of the terms that might be useful to a natural historian. The result is one of those last-resort reference books that might add to a definition from a more comprehensive work.

Despite the honey possum and gum tree on the dust jacket, and the number of Australian contributors, the book is still Eurocentric. All rainforests are described briefly and inaccurately under 'African rain forest' while an entire

column is devoted to various sorts of British and American frogs, no Australian amphibian being mentioned. The best part can be read in a book shop: David Attenborough's foreword describing communication with a blow-pipe-toting Dayak by means of Latin names.

SG

**Ladakh-Zanskar** edited by Charles Genoud (Artou, second edition 1984).

With increasing numbers of adventure-seeking travellers exploring the better publicized regions of the Himalayas, it is surprising that so few venture into the hidden kingdoms of Ladakh and Zanskar. Perhaps this small book will help to rectify this. Politically located in far north-western India, it is geographically part of Tibet. These lands lie beyond that great chain of mountains separating the Indian sub-continent from central Asia. The unique Tibetan way of life still continues, largely unchanged by the upheavals that have transformed Tibet in recent years.

The title page states that this well-illustrated publication is 'for travellers, mountaineers and lovers of Tibetan culture'. While the statement is basically true, the main strength of this guide lies in the background knowledge it imparts rather than as a field guide to lead you to the major points of interest. Two-thirds of the book is divided into chapters describing the geography, geology, economy, Buddhist culture and the Tibetan language. Further chapters cover the two neighbouring ancient kingdoms of Ladakh and Zanskar. The section on wintering in Zanskar, whilst it provides interesting reading, is unlikely to create a demand for a new winter holiday resort. The last part is devoted to descriptive notes of some of the walking routes, together with a small section

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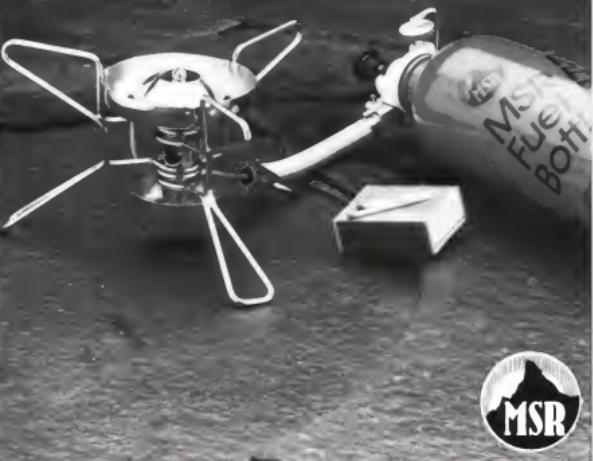
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## Reviews



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on mountaineering, followed by a short section on general information. However these are insufficiently detailed to be of much use, and the book fails to give much help on where to acquire guides and food supplies—essential information in a land that lacks either surplus food or good maps, and where bandits are not unknown. (These comments, by the way, do not apply if you stay close to the motorable road that leads into Ladakh from Kashmir.)

If, like this reviewer, you have had the good fortune to have travelled to Ladakh or Zanskar, you will find yourself transported back to this mysterious land on the far side of the Himalayas. If, on the other hand, you are contemplating a visit for the first time, this guide will inform you on many aspects of life in this desolate region, and may well be the final spur to tempt you to visit these hospitable people before the modern world changes their unique way of life.

John Siseman

**Hypothermia, Frostbite, and Other Cold Injuries**, edited by James Wilkerson (The Mountaineers, 1986).

Hypothermia, frostbite, trench foot and chilblains are forms of cold injury that the outdoor recreationalist may suffer. This monograph explains the physiology of cold injuries and methods of prevention, recognition and prehospital treatment.

The editor is author of the popular book in The Mountaineers series 'Medicine for Mountaineering'. *Hypothermia* has 114 pages, including six colour photos, and is written lucidly. Cold-water immersion hypothermia is particularly well covered, and is essential reading for water recreationalists.

I recommend this book to group leaders and those involved in outdoor education and search and rescue.

Steve Bennett

**Trekking in the Indian Himalaya** by Garry Weare (Lonely Planet, 1986, RRP \$9.95).

Trekking in Nepal has become a popular, almost casual business, attracting many who have never before carried a pack or walked in the mountains. Trekking in the Indian Himalayas is unlikely to become as popular or accessible; experience and preparation are necessary for a successful venture into these hills, which are generally wilder and more thinly-populated than those of Nepal.

This book is the best information resource on this area that I have come across. The track notes are necessarily brief, and not sufficient to guide you every step of the way. But they provide basic information that the serious trekker will want to know; where to get food supplies, where to hire pack-horses, when to expect snow to clear from the high passes, and so on.

All the mountainous areas of north India are covered: Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and the Himalayan foothills of Uttar Pradesh. Notes on the history, geography, flora and fauna of the regions are included. The maps are delightfully clear and easy to read. For the do-it-yourself traveller, this is a valuable tool.

Trevor Lewis

Publications for possible review are welcome. Send them to the Editor, Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181

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# Alpine Wonders

Walking without tracks in north-east Victoria, by Sandra Bardwell

## Track Notes



● MEETING THE EDITOR'S REQUEST FOR TRACK notes about a real bushwalk, preferably off tracks for most of the way, somewhere in the Victorian Alps, proved surprisingly difficult. Except perhaps in the far north-east of the area, vehicular tracks have proliferated to such an extent that it is almost impossible to avoid them during a two- to three-day walk. This is a disturbing state of affairs in what is generally regarded as Victoria's prime walking territory, and part of the proposed Alpine National Park.

However, a plan for a potentially varied, interesting and energetic walk was formed, partly in the south-west corner of Wonnangatta-Moroka National Park. Research revealed that the route was something of an innovation: Howitt Road-Mt Reynard-Red Spur-Caledonia River-Pine Creek-Long Hill-Crinoline-Wellington River. But even the best plans can be confounded. Shortage of daylight, cold, wet weather and the high level of the Caledonia River made it impossible to complete the walk as planned. In summer there should be no bar to following the Caledonia River between Dingo Creek and Pine Creek, though some wading past low cliffs would be necessary. The exit spur would be rather steep and scrubby at lower levels; a narrow band of broken rock not far below Long Hill should be readily negotiable.

Ideally three days should be allowed for the walk, the two camps being made on the Caledonia River, in the vicinity of Dingo Creek, and at or near the start of the climb to Long Hill.

It is hoped that this article spurs some *Wild* readers to do this walk, in suitable conditions, through some rarely visited country.

**Access.** From Licola (54.5 kilometres north of Heyfield) follow the Tamboritha Road to Arbuckle Junction (47.5 kilometres, of which just over half is unsealed) and then the Howitt Road to the Snowy Range Airfield (13 kilometres). Park opposite the track leading to the building on the airfield (grid reference 790654 Howitt). A car shuffle arrangement is necessary; park another vehicle at or near the Melbourne Grammar School camp on Tamboritha Road near Breakfast Creek (GR 658475 Maffra), 19 kilometres north of Licola and 41.5 kilometres south-west of the airfield.

**When to visit.** Late November to late April. Early in this season water should be available on Mt Reynard (which would not usually be the case during summer and autumn) but the river level would be higher than during the summer. Obtaining water could be difficult on the Crinoline ridge.

**Special features.** Mt Reynard is sufficiently high (1,700 metres) and exposed that snow

*Finding Mt Reynard's highest point is no easy matter!*  
Chris Baxter

could fall at any time of the year—be prepared with appropriate equipment and clothing. Route finding on the broad expanses of Mt Reynard's summit plateau is tricky in poor visibility—a compass should be carried. Following the Caledonia River is not easy—some experience in walking along trackless, scrubby river banks would be an advantage. Carry sufficient water for the whole of day three, from the Caledonia River, up and over the Crinoline.

**Further information and maps.** SR Brookes, *Snowy Plains, Mt Wellington, and Lake Tali Karng*, 1:63,360, planimetric, 1985.

SR Brookes, *Portion of the Macalister River Watershed*, 1:126,720, planimetric, 1986.

Howitt (8223) and Maffra (8222) sheets in the Natmap 1:100,000 series.

Forests Commission, Victoria, Moroka (832), 1:63,360, planimetric.

John Siseman, *Wonnangatta Moroka National Park* (Algoa), 1985.

Melbourne Bushwalkers, *Walk*, 1976, page 76; 1984, page 68; 1986, pages 90-1, 94-5.

**The walk.** Follow the minor vehicular track which leads south-west from opposite the airfield access track. After almost three kilometres across Racecourse Plain, bear



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south-west at an inconspicuous track junction. Not far beyond the third crossing of tributaries of the East Caledonia River, leave the track and walk a little west of south, up a semi-open, shallow creek valley draining the northern slopes of Mt Reynard. In a short distance, emerge on to the broad open expanses of the mountain. The location of the highest point is a matter of conjecture as there are no easily identifiable landmarks. Continue south and south-east to the southern corner of the summit plateau, marked by the reappearance of snow gum woodland and a line of broken low cliffs. Here are good views of the rugged Dingo Creek and the Caledonia River valley.

To locate Red Spur from the vicinity of the low cliffs, cross the head of an open gully and bear just south of west, approximately 240° magnetic. The spur is fairly broad at first, but it narrows as height is lost and is easy to follow down to the river. Apart from a band of thick wattle in the early stages the going is pleasant, through open forest and a few small clearings.

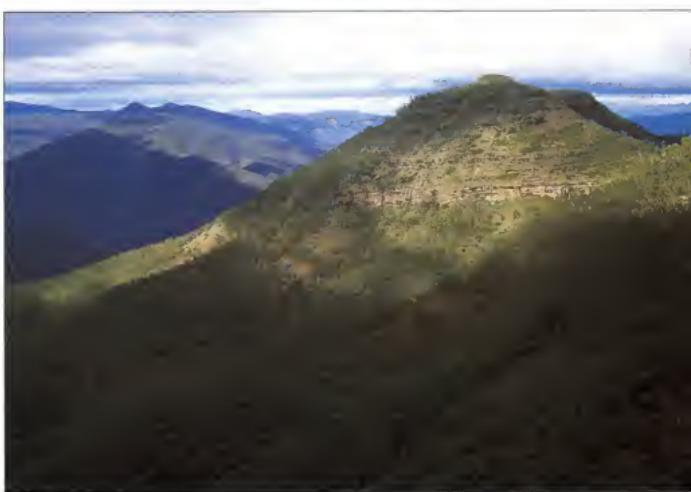
The descent completed, cross the vehicular track on the east bank of the Caledonia River, then Dingo Creek a short distance further on. The next two or three kilometres of the Caledonia River are probably typical of the river downstream: a fairly sinuous course with cliffs up to about ten metres high, rising directly from the river bank; dense ti-tree and wattle scrub; plenty of opportunities for boulder-hopping when the river is low; and largish pools.

From a point about 500 metres downstream from the junction of Pine Creek, a spur leads generally south-east up to Long Hill; it is

scrubby at first but only lightly timbered for the rest of the climb. If time permits, the Caledonia River could be followed as far as the junction with the Macalister River to an excellent campsite and a negotiable spur leading up to

the western side of Long Hill.

Once on Long Hill, the way is straightforward along a foot track which is generally clear enough on the ground to follow easily. However, recently axed blazes and needlessly slashed



Although not large, the Crinoline is one of the most distinctive peaks in the Victorian Alps. Sandra Bardwell

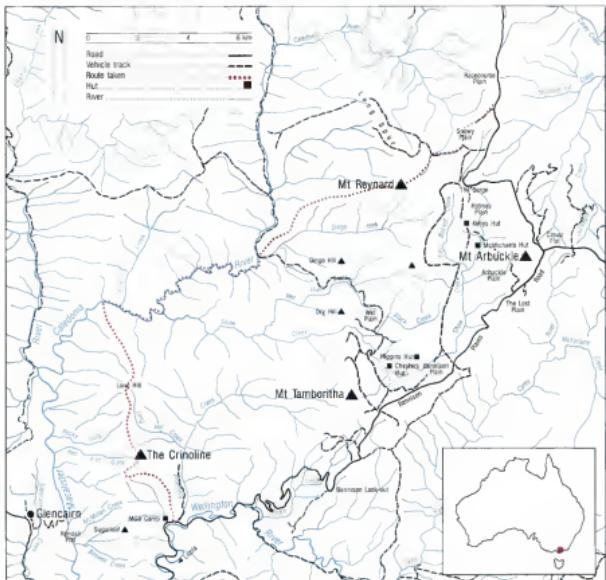
trees far exceed the needs of route finding and make one wonder at the state of mind of the vandals responsible.

Nevertheless, this is an excellent walk along the narrow, sharply undulating ridge. The track crosses numerous small, rocky clearings and passes through open eucalypt forest, patches of thick ti-tree and blackwood, and sparse heathland. The views are superb, of deep valleys and timbered ridges westwards to the horizon, and on a clear day, the Strzelecki Ranges and, incongruously, Loy Yang power station are visible far to the south.

The Crinoline (its official name is much less evocative: Mt Ligar) is an extraordinary feature: a massive, thinly-timbered lump of broadly banded, reddish rock tapering to a small, tree-capped summit—a unique profile among more conventionally shaped neighbours. The easiest approach to the summit is on the western flank and up through a break in the cliffs. From the top continue south over open, broken ground and down into trees where the track swings east to begin the descent. (Time permitting, it would be possible to go on along the ridge to Bruni's Knob and then turn east and descend to the Wellington River. The route is marked intermittently with rusty tin lids.) There is little respite from the knee-shattering steepness of the descent; the track leads directly to the Melbourne Grammar School camp beside the Tambooritha Road and close to Breakfast Creek. ●

Sandra Bardwell (see Contributors in Wild no 4) is Wild's Contributing Editor on Track Notes. Her books are widely read by walkers seeking reliable track notes for walks within reach of Melbourne

## Mt Reynard and the Crinoline



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# Walking Boots

A detailed survey of what is available in Australia, by Dave Jones

## Wild Gear Survey



• THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF A PAIR OF walking boots is how they fit your feet. You should try on as many pairs of walking boots as you can and leave them on your feet for as long as you can. Remember that your feet will tend to get wider when you are carrying a pack or walking for a long time.

Choose the correct type of boots for the type of walking you do. Do not choose a pair of heavy boots if you only do day trips on prepared tracks. Similarly do not buy a pair of lightweight boots if you intend using them for a four-week mud- and scrub-bashes in South-west Tasmania.

The main reason for wearing boots is to protect your feet. If you are walking in rocky terrain it is very easy to hurt your feet by standing on sharp rocks, bruising your instep, slipping sideways and bashing your ankle or slipping forwards and stubbing your toes. Your feet will also stay much warmer and drier in a good pair of boots should you encounter snow.

**Construction.** There are five main construction methods for bushwalking boots. *Direct vulcanized*: The sole is effectively moulded onto the upper. This results in light and generally flexible boots. *Cement bonded*: The sole is glued on to the upper, resulting in similar boots to vulcanized ones. *Outside stitch-down*: The upper is stitched round the outside on to the mid-sole. The outer sole is then glued to the

mid-sole. The result is usually flexible and light-to middle-weight boots. *Littleway* or *inside stitched*: The upper is stitched to the mid-sole from inside which protects the stitching but makes it very hard to check the quality of the job. The outer sole is then glued to the mid-sole. This construction is usually applied to middle-to heavyweight boots. *Norwegian welt*: The boot upper is stitched horizontally to an inner sole and vertically to the mid-sole. The outer sole is then glued on. Norwegian weltting is generally accepted as the strongest construction available and is usually used for stiff, heavy boots.

**Stiffness.** The stiffness of boot soles will give you a fair idea of what they are meant to be used for. Soft boots are best used for day walking in easy terrain, rigid boots are for heavy packs in very rough, rocky terrain. In between these are various degrees of stiffness. If you cannot bend boots at all by hand, they are stiff. If you can bend them up at the toe they are medium, and if you can easily bend them up in the middle, they are very soft. Apart from the style of construction, the major factor affecting the stiffness of a boot sole is the shank. A shank is a piece of metal or wood built into the boot and running from the heel towards the toe. Shanks vary in length and rigidity, and affect the stiffness and flex pattern of the sole as a whole.

*Trionic testing ground—eat your heart out, Berghaus! (The 'track' to Frenchmans Cap, Tasmania.) Rod Smith*

The weights of boots in this survey (given for size 8) range from 1.02 to 1.8 kilograms.

**Materials.** The material of the outer layer of boots will affect their weight, toughness, waterproofness and comfort. Boots made of synthetic fabrics (usually with leather or suede reinforcing) are usually the lightest and most supple. They can, however, suffer from problems of waterproofness and breathability, sometimes simultaneously! Leather is by far the most common material for walking boots. It has a long tradition of use in footwear because it is supple, strong and can be reasonably waterproof yet still breathe well, thus allowing sweat to escape.

Leather comes in many different forms and qualities because it is a natural, not manufactured, material and can be processed in several different ways. Most of the differences are academic. However, you should enquire as to what to use for waterproofing when you buy boots. Some combinations of leather type and proofing compound may ruin an expensive purchase.

Most boots are lined with a thin layer of leather. Between the inner and outer layers of the boots you will usually find a layer of foam padding. High-tech boots may feature a Gore-

# Bartell walked into history in Rossi Boots.



**D**esert walker Denis Bartell knew he was making life or death decisions when he chose the equipment for his attempt to walk unaided across Australia.

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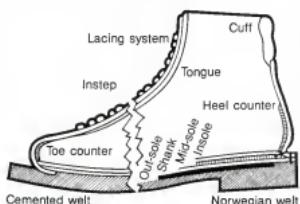
Tex sock liner. This seems to be the best way to keep feet dry as these liners should completely stop water penetration. Cheaper boots may use a linen lining, or even no lining at all. (Cambelle is a woven synthetic fabric. Loden is a woollen felt. Marque is a light nylon, polyester and polypropylene felt.)

**Tongue.** For optimum comfort the tongues should be padded so that the laces do not leave grooves in your feet. If they are gussetted, which means sewn up both sides to near the toe, it will help to keep water, sticks, stones and leeches out.

**Lacing.** There are three major lacing devices used: eyelets, D-rings and hooks. Eyelets are the most tedious to lace as you have to thread the tension from eyelet to eyelet to get the most comfortable fit. Check the underside of eyelets to make sure they do not have any sharp edges. D-rings are an improvement over eyelets as the lace will slide more freely through them. Hooks provide the greatest amount of adjustment, as it is possible to vary the tension over different sections of the lacing by locking off the laces between two hooks. Some boots have locking hooks for this purpose. They are usually wider and longer than the other hooks, and are quite often set further back. Most boots use a com-

bination of two types of lacing. This is done to provide flexibility.

Some people do not like lacing hooks because they get snagged on vegetation. I have never found this to be a problem.



**Breaking in.** There is no easy way to break in a new pair of boots. People do the most amazing (and destructive) things to try to speed up the process, but there is no short cut. Take as long as possible to wear them in by walking short distances at a time. Take new boots on day walks and wear them for a couple of hours before changing into a pair of sandals or old

boots. Build up the time gradually, and you should minimize the pain. Avoid such drastic measures as filling them up with neats-foot oil or water! Light boots require much less breaking in than heavy ones.

Berghaus and Scarpa are co-operating to produce gaiters and overboots which match the Scarpa Trionic range of boots. The result is the driest feet I have ever experienced. You can even wade quickly through shallow creeks and still keep your feet dry.

The Yeti Trionic gaiter has a zip and Velcro opening down the front so that you can lace your boots without taking them off. They last quite well provided you do not regularly walk on sharp scree, which can wear out the rubber bands that stretch round the boots' welts and insteps. Rubber bands are replaceable. The standard Berghaus Yeti gaiters fit stiffer boots, such as boots with a Norwegian welt.

Prices of imported boots are, of course, subject to imminent increases.

See also the *Wild Gear Surveys* in *Wild* nos 8 and 17, and *Getting Started in Wild* no 18. •

Dave Jones (see Contributors in *Wild* no 6) has worked in specialist outdoor shops for many years. His knowledge (and collection!) of outdoor gear is renowned.

## Wild Gear Survey Bushwalking Boots

Use	Weight kg/size 8	Height cm/size 8	Construction	Shank	Outer material	Living material	Lacing	Tongue	Size range	Approx price
<b>Asolo</b> Italy										
Trek	Light	1.02	15	Littleway, cement bonded	Half, steel	Cordura, suede	Cambelle	D-rings, hooks	Padded	\$13
Trek-G	Light	1.1	15	As above	As above	As above	Cambelle, Gore-Tex	As above	As above	\$11
Super Scout	Medium	1.2	16	As above	As above	As above	Cambelle	Gusset, padded	As above	\$11
Rambler	Medium	1.3	15.5	As above	As above	Full-grain leather	As above	Eyes, hooks	As above	\$11
Horizon	Heavy	1.3	17	As above	As above	As above	Loden	D-rings, hooks	As above	\$11
Horizon S	As above	1.4	17	As above	As above	As above	As above	As above	As above	\$11
<b>Blundstone</b> Australia										
Mountain Master 660	Medium	1.4	17	Cement bonded	Half, wood	Full-grain leather	Half suede	D-rings, hooks	Gusset	\$12
<b>Dunlop</b> Korea										
KT Bushwalker	Light	0.76	13	Cement bonded	None	Nylon, suede	Nylon	D-rings, eyes	Gusset, padded	\$12
<b>Lowa</b> Germany										
Trucker 412	Light, medium	1.38	19	Vulcanized	None	Full-grain leather	Leather	D-rings, hooks	Padded	\$12
<b>Merrall</b> Italy										
Gore-Tex	Light	na	na	Cement bonded	na	Nylon, suede	Leather, Gore-Tex	D-rings, hooks	Gusset, padded	\$16
Leather Lite	Light, medium	na	na	Littleway, cement bonded	na	Full-grain leather	Leather	As above	As above	\$16
Leather	Medium	na	na	As above	na	As above	As above	As above	As above	\$13
Leather Gore-Tex	As above	na	na	As above	na	As above	As above	As above	As above	\$16
Wilderness	Medium, heavy	na	na	Norwegian welt	na	As above	As above	As above	As above	\$16
<b>Rossi</b> Australia										
Scrub	Light	1.37	15.5	Stitch-down	Half, steel	Full-grain leather	Linen toe	Eyes	Gusset	\$75
Hawk	Light, medium	1.53	17	As above	As above	As above	Leather, linen	Hooks, eyes	Gusset, padded	\$12
Falcon	As above	1.64	13	As above	As above	As above	Leather	Eyes	As above	\$90
Eagle	As above	1.77	20	As above	As above	As above	Leather, linen	As above	As above	\$120
<b>Scarpa</b> Italy										
SL	Light, medium	1.34	18	Littleway, cement bonded	Nylon	Full-grain leather	Cambelle	D-rings, hooks	Gusset, padded	\$19
Mirage	As above	1.48	18	As above	As above	As above	As above	As above	As above	\$175
Marita	As above	1.5	18	As above	As above	As above	Leather, suede	As above	As above	\$200
Cos	Medium	1.6	18	As above	As above	As above	Cambelle, Gore-Tex	As above	As above	\$269
<b>Wild Country</b> Germany										
Desert Boot	Light	1.4	16	Littleway, cement bonded	None	Cordura, suede	Marque	D-rings, hooks	Gusset	\$12
Leather Light	Medium	1.6	18	Norwegian welt	Half, nylon	Full-grain leather	As above	Hooks, eyes	Padded	\$146
Mountain Light	Medium, heavy	1.8	22	As above	Three-quarter, nylon	As above	Split leather	D-rings, hooks	Gusset, padded	\$180
<b>Zamberlan</b> Italy										
Terelite	Light, medium	1.4	16.5	Cement bonded	Half, ABS	Full-grain leather	Leather	D-rings, hooks	Gusset, padded	\$183
Sportelite	Light, medium	1.51	18	As above	As above	Cordura, suede	As above	As above	As above	\$179

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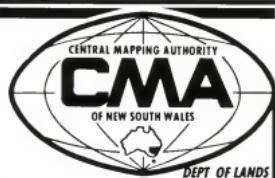
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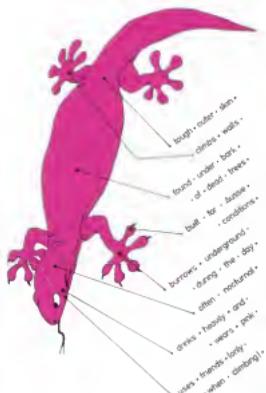
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# Contributors

**Michael Groom** is a member of a family known to generations of Queensland bushwalkers, particularly for its connection with the famous Lamington Plateau.

Having served a tough Himalayan apprenticeship on the successful Australian expedition to Annapurna III, Michael has developed into a proven mountaineer, as his climbing to within 200 metres of the world's third-highest summit suggests. After the Kangchenjunga expedition he squeezed in a 'season' climbing in Europe's Mont Blanc Range before racing home to Brisbane to finish his article which appears in this issue.

**Graeme Hill**, 28, is employed by BHP as a mechanical engineer. He has been rockclimbing for almost 14 years, mostly on the crags around his home on the south coast of New



South Wales. Rockclimbing has taken him to most of the major areas in Australia, New Zealand and the USA. Graeme is also an active mountaineer with eight seasons in the New Zealand Alps to his credit.

**Roddy Maclean** lives with his wife in the country near Launceston. His partiality towards wild and remote places was kindled during his



childhood in Scotland and, since coming to Tasmania 15 years ago, he has developed a deep love for the wilderness areas of his new home, particularly the remoter corners of the South-west.

Roddy teaches biology at Launceston Community College, and is a member of the Launceston Walking Club. A long-held ambition to walk across Tasmania (described in this issue) was satisfied when he and his wife made the trip in 1985.

**Marianne Portenier**, 22, has bushwalked extensively in New South Wales since she was young, particularly in the Blue Mountains and Barrington Tops areas. In 1985 she completed a science degree at the University of Sydney,



majoring in zoology and botany. Her fascination with Australia's arid regions began with a university field trip to a research station north of Broken Hill to study the physiology and behaviour of kangaroos. Since then she has been on several working trips to the mallee country of central NSW to study the mallee fowl. More recently she has visited the National Parks of outback NSW. Her aim is to explore every National Park in Australia, and recent calculations indicate that she has only 230 to go!

**Robert Townshend** was a French teacher before working as manager and cook in a Sydney restaurant. The business survived a fire-bombing but Robert's management. Retired from private enterprise, he now works harmlessly in the field of recreation, as well as doing a little writing (most recently, for the *National Times*). He likes to walk, paddle and, above all, run in the bush; though he has been known to dawdle around a tempting campsite, wasting precious hours that could be given to abseiling practice or relentless scrub bashing. His ideas on bush food have been born of such idleness.

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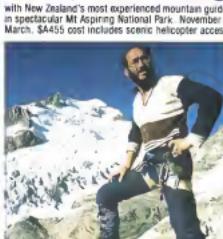
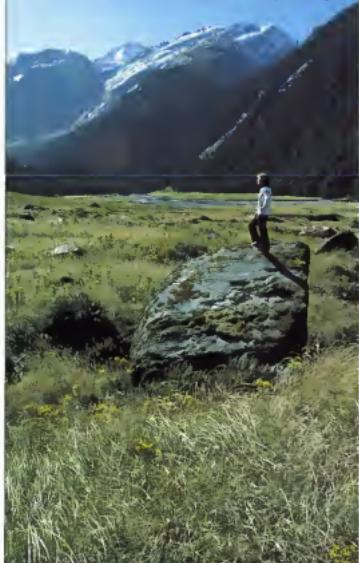
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# Ageing Gracefully?

Former editor comes out swinging

**Wildfire**

Although I am a member of the walking club that publishes *The Walker*, I write as an individual, and this letter must not be construed in any other way.

I was amused, almost bemused, at the criticism in *Wild* no 20 of *The Walker* 1986 for publishing an article not wholly supportive of the present direction of the conservation movement. The criticism seems to be based on the premise that a magazine such as *The Walker* should not dare to publish an article of that nature.

There was much in 'How the Greenies Are Getting It All Wrong' with which I totally disagreed, but if I had still been editor of *The Walker*, as I was for 15 years, I would have had no hesitation in publishing the article. It is appalling that one cannot be even-handed in such matters without being attacked, especially given the current situation of South-east Asian countries telling the Australian Government that unfavourable Press articles should be censored.

As for the throw-away comment that *The Walker* may be showing its age, I agree—it exhibits maturity. May I also add that *Wild* is showing its age too—lack of years.

Grow up, *Wild*; perhaps you could make a tentative step in that direction by publishing this letter in your next issue.

Alan Budge  
Clayton, Vic

It is one thing to publish a well-reasoned and factually-based divergent opinion, another to encourage misinformation, factual inaccuracy and prejudice. If *The Walker* chooses to include articles exhibiting the latter characteristics it can expect the sort of review its 1986 issue received in *Wild*. Even the most cursory inspection of the *Wildfire* column of recent issues of *Wild* will demonstrate our willingness to publish letters critical of walkers, conservationists, and *Wild*, provided such comments appear to be factual and fair. The reason our reviewer gave for wondering whether *The Walker* might be showing its age would appear to be valid. Perhaps Alan Budge's prickly defence is another sign.

Chris Baxter  
Editor

## Rubbish

A recent trip to Mt Feathertop in Victoria proved yet again the disturbing fact that many bushwalkers have little or no regard for the environment they walk in. The snow gum forest that surrounds Federation Hut has been repeatedly raided for firewood with the result that almost every tree had stumps where live branches had been sawn or hacked off. There were also large numbers of tin cans and other garbage lying

around. This, of course, is not unique to Victoria. Similar areas exist in the Blue Mountains of New South Wales, parts of Tasmania, and I presume, throughout the country. The fact that these areas are nearly always within an easy day's walk of a road makes the habit all the more disgusting—it would be so easy to carry out the rubbish.

A major argument put forward by conservationists when trying to save an area from exploitation is that if the area is not preserved, something of considerable beauty and value would have been lost. For this argument to be effective, the land already within National Parks must remain unpolluted to prove to those who wish to exploit wilderness that those who use such areas care for them. You can imagine how successful the campaign to save the Franklin would have been if there were large numbers of beer cans floating down the river. I can remember standing on top of Feathertop looking at the logging devastation in the Kiewa valley and thinking that those who perpetrated that horror probably had the same regard for the environment as those who left their garbage behind.

Ted Plummer  
Bondi, NSW

## Groupies?

I am worried about large parties that are attempting to traverse the Arthur Ranges in Tasmania. Along the Arthur Ranges the campsites are small, tracks are narrow and there are few alternative routes. Taking a large party of walkers into this area is more than inconsiderate to other walkers; it is irresponsible.

Any capable and reasonably fit party can traverse the Arthurs. The considerable danger of such a trip lies in the frequent occurrence of stormy weather.

It does not matter how well the party is led, a larger party is far more dangerous. There is significant danger to yourselves in managing a large party over rugged terrain in bad weather. There is a danger to others who, in bad weather, find a campsite full or are held up at the harder sections of the track. In fairness to yourselves and others the Arthurs Ranges is not a place for parties larger than four to six people.

In our case the weather was well behaved. I enjoyed the company of the people in the large parties that we met. Yet I am concerned that large parties are going into such an area.

Antony Harvey  
Conservation Convenor  
Melbourne University Mountaineering Club  
Parkville, Vic

Readers' letters are welcome. A selection will be published in this column. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be published. Write to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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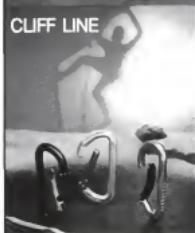


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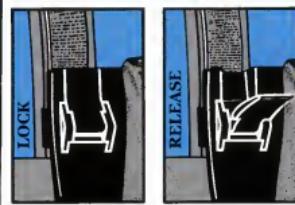
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A closer look at Laser gives a greater understanding of the technical innovation for which the Berghaus name is synonymous. Laser is a carrying system designed to provide a superb combination of stability, comfort and ventilation. The hip belt wraps snugly around the hips giving a comfortable hip-loading carry, whilst the triple density foam construction ensures

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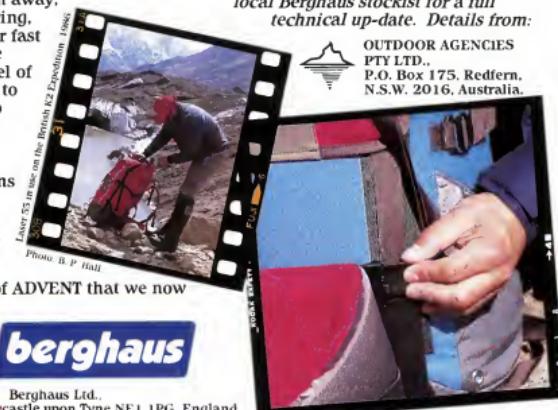
believe it to be a major step forward in rucksac fabric technology, and a future bench mark for performance rucksacs.

And it doesn't end there. The Luxury Laser packs also feature the design registered Berghaus occipital (head) cavity which allows much greater freedom of head movement, even on a high loaded pack.

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*For further information on the technically innovative Laser and its many user performance benefits, we recommend that you contact your local Berghaus stockist for a full technical up-date. Details from:*

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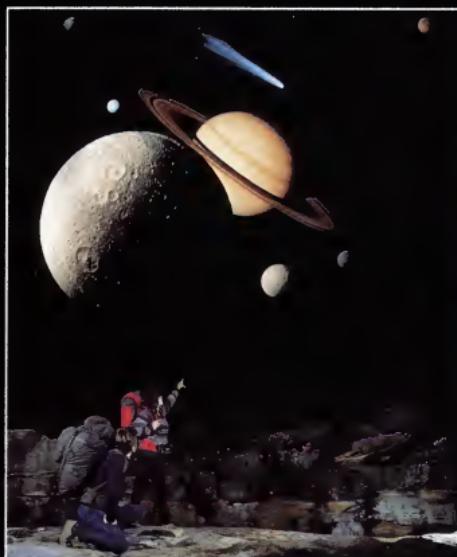
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Riverland Canoeing Adventures  
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Thor Adventure Travel  
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East Melbourne 3002  
Ph (03) 419 2333

Bush Camp & Beyond  
Musgrave  
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Halls Gap 3381  
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Bogong Jack Adventures  
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Ph (Fox Glacier) 825

Alpine Recreation Canterbury Ltd  
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Lake Tekapo  
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Ph (Twizel) 737

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Wanaka  
Ph (03943) 7330

Ski Guides NZ Ltd  
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Ph (Wanaka) 7930

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Auckland  
Ph (Auckland) 79 9855

Westland Glacier Skiing  
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Fox Glacier  
Ph (Fox Glacier) 825

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Activities include bicycle touring,  
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huts, rafting, sea-kayaking, sailing,  
water skiing. New members welcome.  
Contact YHA Victoria, 122 Flinders  
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Activities include canoeing, climbing,  
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(062) 46 5648, or Treasurer (062) 48 7142.

**Central West Bushwalking Club** meets the 3rd Saturday of each month at 8 pm at the  
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GPO Box 815F, Melbourne 3001.

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**Scout Association of Australia.** For  
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**The Walking Club of Victoria Inc**  
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Melbourne (opposite Trades Hall).  
Activities include bicycle touring,  
bushwalking, canoeing, field studies,  
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